

BV
813
.H35
1831

From the Library of
Professor Samuel Miller
in Memory of
Judge Samuel Miller Breckinridge
Presented by
Samuel Miller Breckinridge Long
to the Library of
Princeton Theological Seminary

BV 813 .H35 1831
Hamilton, William T. 1796-
1884.
Infant baptism

John Smith

with a request for

John Smith



Sam. Miller.

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

SCRIPTURAL ORDINANCE :

AND

BAPTISM BY SPRINKLING

LAWFUL.

BY WM. T. HAMILTON, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWARK, N. J.

NEWARK :

PRINTED BY WILLIAM TUTTLE.

1831.

District of New-Jersey, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eleventh day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one, and in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, WILLIAM T. HAMILTON, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

"Infant Baptism, a Scriptural Ordinance: and Baptism by Sprinkling Lawful. By Wm. T. Hamilton, A M. Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Newark, N. J."

In conformity to an Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "An act supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, etching and engraving, historical and other prints."

WM. PENNINGTON,
Clerk of the District of New-Jersey

P R E F A C E.

ABOUT two years since, the writer of this little tract had his attention called by circumstances of peculiar interest to the subject of baptism. Doubts would occasionally arise in his mind in relation to one and another point connected with this subject, which, together with his duties as a minister, frequently called upon to administer baptism to infants, laid him under strong obligations to examine the whole subject anew. He consulted every author, both pædobaptist and antipædobaptist, to whose works he could obtain access. He believes that truth was the object at which he aimed. He entered on the investigation, determined to search for the truth, to embrace it on which side soever he

should find it ; and when once satisfied that he had found it, openly to profess it ; even though it should be by offering himself as a candidate for immersion among his Baptist brethren. The result of his research, is a complete removal of his doubts, and a firmer conviction than ever, that Infant Baptism is an ordinance of God—pregnant with blessings, to the church, and to the world. He is, however, well aware of the influence which preconceived opinions will be supposed to have exerted on the result of his inquiries ; and of the abatement with which, on that account, his reasonings will be received. When his mind was satisfied on the subject, he expressed his views to the people of his charge in a short series of sermons. These were shown to some of his brethren, in whose judgment and candour he places confidence. It was thought that their circulation might promote the cause of truth, especially in the region of country where the writer is best known. Accordingly, at the suggestion of a much-esteemed brother in the ministry, the sermons were laid aside, and this treatise was written, embracing the same train of reasoning, and embodying a few brief remarks on the mode of baptism, which had not been touched on

in the sermons. It is only justice to remark, that from the perusal of the late Dr. John Mason's *Strictures on "the Church of God,"*—of Dr. Wood's *Lectures on Infant Baptism*—of *Letters on Infant Baptism*, by Dr. Ralston, of Williamsport, Washington county, Pennsylvania, first published in the *Christian Advocate*—and of Dr. Worcester, on *Infant Baptism*, he has obtained several valuable hints. Nor has he failed to consult on the Baptist side of the question, Dr. Ryland's *Sermon*—Mr. Booth's *Pædobaptism Examined*—Gibb's *Defence of the Baptists*—Frey's *Essays on Baptism*—*Letters of David and John*—*Jones' Church History*—and several other writers. Defects, perhaps glaring defects, this treatise may contain: an honest exposition of the reasons that weigh in his own mind, the writer is sure it presents.

Believing that it meets the wants of this region of country more nearly than any thing he has yet found, the writer commits this little treatise to the press with fervent prayers for the blessing of the church's glorious Head to accompany it; and in so doing, he offers it *to the people of his charge*, and to the Session of the church he serves, with peculiar interest, as a token of his earnest desire that

they may be rooted and grounded in the faith, and that their children after them may prize the privileges of that covenant, the application of whose seal in baptism brings them also within the purview of its promise, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee."

WM. T. HAMILTON.

NEWARK, *January 19, 1821.*

ON INFANT BAPTISM.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURAL WARRANT FOR THE
PRACTICE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

THE great body of Christians in our day believe that it is right to baptize infants ; and they act accordingly. One denomination, justly esteemed for their evangelical spirit, and their zealous labours in the field of missionary operations, condemn this practice : yet both profess to be guided by the scriptures alone. It becomes then an object deeply interesting to a serious mind, to ascertain where the truth lies in relation to this long contested subject. The design of the following pages is to furnish a plain statement of the reasons which satisfy the minds of very many, that the baptism of infants is no device of man, no unmeaning relic of popish superstition, but a scriptural and most important practice. Before entering on the more immediate consideration of this subject, it will be necessary to offer some preliminary remarks.

It cannot fail to have struck every one at all conversant

sant with the writings of those who deny the doctrine of infant baptism, that they commonly adduce a variety of directions and examples from Scripture, which teach that all who believe in Christ are entitled to baptism ; and then, having made out satisfactorily, that believers' baptism is scriptural, they set it down as an argument in their favour and against us.—This does at least carry the appearance of being disingenuous. The evidence deduced from Scripture, in support of adult baptism, or rather believers' baptism, is common property. We value it as highly, and act on it as constantly, as do our anti-pædobaptist brethren ; never refusing baptism to an adult who makes a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, never baptizing any adults who do not make such profession. But all this has nothing to do with infant baptism, and should be left wholly out of view in this discussion ; unless it can be shown, that because certain persons *have* a right to an ordinance, therefore no others have. What relates to believers, and them alone, has nothing to do with the question of infant baptism. The simple point of inquiry should be, What grounds do the scriptures furnish us to conclude that infants may or may not be baptized ? and if five hundred precepts and as many examples could be gathered from the bible, which, on examination, are found to relate only to adults or to believers, they do not touch the question ; any more than do the precepts against murder and adultery ; and should be equally passed over in this inquiry.

What, then, is the proper kind of evidence admissible in this case ? It is indeed greatly to be desired that the decision of this preliminary question were amicably

agreed on by both parties. Till this is done, the dispute can never be brought to a close. While one party insist upon one kind of evidence, which is not to be found, and which, in the nature of the case, could not be looked for, and refuse peremptorily to listen to any arguments drawn from other sources ; unanimity of sentiment is impossible, and the dispute can never cease. The advocates of infant baptism cheerfully admit that the Scriptures furnishes no express command, nor any plain and undeniable example of the baptism of infants. But while making this admission, we contend that the examples of household baptism, (though it is not expressly said of any one of those households, that it contained young infants,) are yet directly favourable to the doctrine of infant baptism ; the probability being stronger that they did contain infants than that they did not ; while the case of the jailer's household, furnishes no light ground for the baptism of some, on a profession of the faith of others, not their own. At the same time we contend, that an express command for the baptism of infants was unnecessary, since they had for ages been received into the Jewish church by circumcision. When, under the Old Testament dispensation a gentile, not of the seed of Abraham, forsook his idols, and joined himself to the people of God, he was circumcised, and his children with him, on the strength of his profession to serve God. Suppose then that circumcision had been continued, and baptism had not been appointed, but that the commission had been—"Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations, circumcising them in the name, &c." who can doubt that the Apostles would

have understood their commission to require the circumcision of the infants of their converts, as well as of the converts themselves? To Jews, accustomed to regard the infants of those who avouched Jehovah to be their God, as the proper subjects of circumcision, no repetition of the command to circumcise infants was needed: if infants were not to be circumcised, they would look for an express prohibition in the case. In like manner, when *baptize* was the command, instead of circumcise, it is inevitable, that without an express prohibition in relation to infants, they must have regarded the commission as requiring them to baptize infants as well as adults: and with this, their baptizing whole households, on the conversion of the head of the family, and recording it in the history of their proceedings, without any mark of peculiarity in the case, well comports; while, if the right of infants to this ordinance had been withheld, it is impossible that Jewish Apostles, and Jewish historians, should not have been more careful to guard against a misconstruction of their conduct in the case.

It is admitted that baptism is a positive ordinance, not a moral precept: that independently of the positive appointment of God to baptize, there is nothing in the nature of things, (so far as we can discover) that renders baptism obligatory: and consequently, that our warrant must be found only in the word of God. We acknowledge that the obligation to baptize rests solely on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church; that the *law of the institution* is the only rule of obedience; so that we may neither add to, nor take away from, that law: and we conceive it but rea-

sonable to expect that that *law* will be found so plain, that on a diligent and impartial consideration of it, (judging of its meaning as we suppose the apostles, to whom as Jews it was first addressed, must have understood it,) it will be found sufficient to guide us safely. But what then? Does all this prove that the mere words uttered by our Lord at the time of his delivering the commission to his disciples, "*Go ye into all the world, teach all nations, baptizing them,*" &c. are the only part of scripture which is to be regarded as the law? It proves nothing more than that the authority of Christ is the only ground of duty in baptism, and that from the sacred scriptures—not from mere tradition, or the opinions of men, or our ideas of expediency—we must gather direction:—but it does not show that by the mere words of the institution, and by scriptural examples alone, we are to be guided, to the exclusion of inferential reasoning from other parts of the word of God. The whole word of God is *the law of his institutions*, and we are bound to collect from it all the light we can to explain their nature and design. No man has a right, when inquiring into an appointment of God, or an ordinance of his church, to say that the Old Testament, or any other part of his word, has nothing to do with the subject, and must be laid wholly aside in treating of it. If the words of institution are the only law of a positive ordinance, then the seventh day, and not the first of the week, must still be observed as a sabbath: or rather, as no express command for sabbatic observance is found in the New Testament, the christian church has no sabbath at all; and some baptists are consistent enough to maintain

this. Then too, guided only by the law of the institution of the Lord's supper, thus understood, no woman, however pious, must sit down at the Lord's table ; as will be shown more at large hereafter. It is by comparing scripture with scripture, that we learn the meaning of any one passage, and the true design of God's ordinances. Whatever can be thus lawfully inferred, is as much a part of divine revelation, as if stated in so many words in fifty different passages of scripture. And on every subject but baptism, baptists themselves reason and infer just as we do ; else would they never admit a female to communion in their churches, nor observe the first day of the week as a holy sabbath.

These remarks will prepare the reader to appreciate the course of argument pursued in this treatise. We contend, that as Jews, accustomed to the membership of infants in the church of God under the Old Testament dispensation, the apostles must have considered themselves bound to admit the infants of believers into the gospel church by baptism, just as of old they were admitted by circumcision,—because no direction to the contrary was given by our Lord. The right of infants to admission to the church by baptism, rests, then, on the truth of these few propositions :

1st. Before the advent of our Lord, God had a true church on earth ; and for many ages, that church had subsisted under a regular organization provided in the Abrahamic covenant.

2nd. The Abrahamic covenant is still in force, and consequently, the Christian church is but a continuance of the Jewish.

3d. Infant membership in the church, once established of God, never revoked, still remains.

4th. Under the gospel dispensation, baptism is substituted in the room of circumcision, as the seal of God's covenant.

From all which, once established, it will follow, that infant baptism is a scriptural practice, to avail ourselves of it for our children, at once a duty and a privilege; and with this conclusion, the language and the conduct of Christ and of his Apostles, and the testimony of church history, will be found on examination, exactly to accord; while all the objections that can be urged, will be seen to be void of force.

It is then asserted:—1st. *God had a true church on earth before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which had for many ages enjoyed a regular organization under the Abrahamic covenant.

By a church is meant, not the company of real saints alone; these never will be beheld together, without an admixture of ungodly men, till the exhibition made at the last day; but a church is made up of *those who take God's revealed will as their guide, and ostensibly render him the worship he has therein prescribed.** In the

* Or it is the company of credible professors of the true religion:—The mention of children is designedly omitted here, just as we omit children when describing any other public society, or a nation:—It might have been said—*a church consists of those who professedly render to God the worship he requires, together with the children who have been consecrated to God after the manner he has prescribed:—*but then this definition might

family of Adam God established a church; he gave them promises, and appointed the way in which he would be worshipped. This we infer from the fact that worship *was* offered, probably by the first pair, whose clothing of skins was most likely obtained from animals slain in sacrifice, Gen. iii. 21, since no grant of animal food is recorded as having been made till after the deluge. It is certain that worship was attempted both by Cain and Abel: now an act of worship performed without authority from God, is what

possibly exclude all who lived before Abraham, since we have no certain evidence that their children were then publicly dedicated to God in any specific manner; although the writer believes it probable, that then already, such infant consecration was made, and made, most likely, in the act of taking the child to attend, for the first time, on a solemn sacrifice.

A definition more satisfactory to some would be, "*the visible church consists of the credible professors of the true religion, together with their children.*" The same uncertainty as to the ante Abrahamic church would accompany this definition that attends the preceding, since, though it is probable, that a provision for the seed of God's people, made in all subsequent ages, was not then unknown, yet we have no direct evidence of that provision prior to the time of Abraham. Moreover, by defining the church to be "*credible professors of the true religion and their children,*" it seems to be conceded, that the children of such professors are from their *birth*, members of the visible church, and that baptism is only a public acknowledgment of that membership; while in the writer's view, such children have from their birth a *right* only to admission; but they do not actually become members until they receive baptism, the initiary ordinance of the church: and yet perhaps, these two difficulties are of little weight, and if so, this definition is quite admissible.

the scriptures denominate *will worship*, which God will not accept. Abel's offering of a bloody sacrifice, presented by faith, Heb. xi. 4, was accepted of God. Gen. iv. 4. Cain's offering of the fruits of the ground was rejected, v. 5; and he was reminded of beasts for a sin-offering, crouching at his very door, Gen. iv. 7. (Such appears to be the true import of the expression. *If thou doest not well—sin lieth at the door*: i. e. a sin-offering—an animal proper to be employed as such, lies' crouching near thy door, Gen. iv. 7.) Obviously then, the worship of God by the sacrifice of slaughtered animals, and in that way alone, had been divinely appointed: and if so, all who worshipped God in that manner during the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, prior to the calling of Abraham, were the church of God. To this, confirmation is lent by what is recorded Gen. iv. 26, and vi. 2. At length, universal corruption spread over the whole world, and the deluge was sent to sweep away the impious race, leaving Noah and his family alone to continue the church, and hand down true religion.

But inasmuch as, after the flood, wickedness again increased with the multiplication of mankind, and threatened the utter extinction of genuine religion, God was pleased to call Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, with designs the most gracious. In Gen. xii. 1—3, we have an account of the call of Abraham and the communication then made to him, in which by promise, (not by covenant*) he was informed of all

* The writer is aware that the term *covenant* is used in the

those blessings to himself personally, to his lineal descendants, and to all the families of the earth through

scriptures with some latitude of meaning, sometimes denoting an agreement between two parties, Gen. xxi. 20—32. Job ix. 15—24. Sometimes a kind of gracious compact into which God enters with men, promising mercies on his part, and requiring the performance of certain conditions on theirs, as Gen. xv. 8—18. Exod. xxiv. 1—8. Sometimes it denotes simply God's purpose or appointment, without any stipulation, Gen. ix. 10, 11. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 25. Sometimes an absolute promise made by God to his people, Isa. lix. 21. Jer. xxxi. 31—35. Hos. ii. 18.

In promising to Noah that no second flood should happen, God appointed the *bow* as a token of his faithfulness, and this promise is called God's covenant, Gen. ix. 8—19. The rainbow might be called the *seal* of that covenant—a seal which God himself affixed, no conditions being exacted of men.

In the covenants with Abraham, in both cases, God promised blessings to Abraham, and required conditions to be performed by Abraham; in the one case slaughtering animals in a certain manner, Gen. xv. 8—18; in the other, circumcising himself and his offspring, Gen. xvii. 9—14: this circumcision was the seal of this covenant;—on God's part that he accepted *faith* as a substitute for perfect righteousness, and would send blessings upon his circumcised seed—on Abraham's, that he did believe God, and would await the fulfilment of his promise: hence to circumcise was to keep God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 10.

Now as every covenant contained a promise, the blessing is often referred to under the name of *the promise*, not being called a covenant, Gal. iii. 14—18. And in Paul's writings the blessings secured to Abraham and his seed in this gracious covenant are frequently spoken of as the *promise* to Abraham, probably because all that was afterwards confirmed in the two covenants was expressed in the general promise given at the time of his call out of Ur.

I have made a distinction between the promise first given and the covenants afterwards confirmed; not that I doubt that God's

him, which were afterwards more particularly explained, amplified, and confirmed in two distinct covenants.

In Gen. xv. we have an account of God's appearing to Abram in vision, and ratifying a covenant with him. Abram offered certain animals, according to the directions given him, and then we read, "*In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,*" v. 13. On this occasion, the first part of the promise made to Abram at the time of his call when in Ur, securing to his posterity possession of the land of Canaan and great national prosperity, was renewed and confirmed by covenant. This promise has exclusive respect to temporal favours, and being now "sealed in the covenant," is never again mentioned by itself.

About fourteen or fifteen years after this transaction (some indeed make it twenty-five years) God appeared again to Abram, and made another covenant with him, as recorded in Gen. xvii. 1—14. Lest the former covenant should appear to be annulled by this—the promise therein made to Abraham's descendants is recognised. But still, this is an entirely different covenant, and ratified by a distinct seal. In addition to the temporal blessings before promised, the promise is now given that Abram should be *the father of many nations*, v. 4, in token of which, his name is changed to *Abraham* :

promises and even his commands are sometimes called covenants in scripture ; but because there was an obvious difference between the simple assurance first given to Abraham in Ur, and the formal manner in which the two covenants were afterwards confirmed.

and then is superadded that most gracious promise, "*I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*" v.7. This, then, was not a mere carnal covenant, securing only temporal blessings. Those who would so represent it, not only degrade, but confound it with the previous covenant recorded in Gen. xv.

Nor is this covenant the same as the covenant of grace,* i. e. it does not convey a promise of salvation

* To avoid misapprehension, I would state, that by the *covenant of grace*, I mean that transaction which takes place between God and an individual of our race, in which personal salvation is secured to him, as distinguished from the covenant of redemption, ratified between God the Father and the Son, for the salvation of all the elect. When a sinner repents and believes on Christ, he consents to the covenant of grace, and God on his part pardons his sins, and confers on him a title to eternal life.

In my view, the covenant with Abraham was something different from this; when God proposes a covenant, saying, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee*, and requires from man a token of his consent, such a token e. g.—as circumcision, or baptism, no sooner is that token given by man in his becoming circumcised or baptized, than all that is covered by that promise is secured to him; and if that promise include saving blessings, then I see not but that every circumcised person must have been saved; and then also, under the gospel, every baptized person must be sure of salvation; a doctrine none are prepared to receive. And in this sense it is that I contend this ancient covenant was not the covenant of *grace*. There is a sense in which God was the God of Abraham, and of all his circumcised seed, equally and alike; a sense in which he is to this day the God of the baptized seed; not for salvation—(for all the baptized are not saved,) but for important purposes, as developed in the course of this treatise; yet inasmuch as circumcision formerly, (a seal of the righteousness of faith,) and baptism now, are a token that God will account faith for righteousness, when a man *believes as Abraham*

to Abraham and the seed specified in this covenant, nor to either of them. Of this covenant circumcision was the original seal, now we all know that to whomsoever any covenant or contract is sealed, that seal absolutely secures to him the full benefit of all the stipulations contained in that covenant. If then this covenant be the same as the covenant of grace, since circumcision was God's seal, not man's, then every circumcised person must have been infallibly sure of salvation: the ancient Jews held this opinion, but the language of Christ and his apostles has taught us differently. Abraham was a believer long before this event, and as such was justified, for he *had believed God (at least fourteen years before,) and his faith was then counted to him for righteousness*, Gen. xv. 6. and circumcision was appointed a seal of the righteousness of the *faith* which he had, being yet uncircumcised, (Rom. iv. 11); so that neither the salvation of Abraham, nor of any of his seed, was determined by this covenant.

But herein God brought Abraham and all his seed, whether natural or adopted, (on whom the seal of circumcision should be placed,) into a new and peculiar relation, so as to be his God and their God in their generations, in one and the same sense; they were hereby brought into a more immediate relation to God, than the rest of mankind, as *his people*.

did, he then becomes a son of Abraham in the higher and spiritual sense, he is Christ's, and Abraham's seed, according to the promise, in its large and saving sense. There are external and also internal blessings covered by that promise.

The *seed* to whom the promise was given, meant not Abraham's natural descendants as such, for Ishmael and Keturah's children were expressly excepted. *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Rom. ix. 7. Gen. xxi. 12. nay Esau, Isaac's son, was also cut off, Rom. xiii. Moreover, provision was made in this very covenant, for the admission of others, not of Abraham's descendants : Gen. xvii. 10—12. And at the supplement added to this covenant at Mount Sinai 430 years after, this provision for the admission of strangers and their offspring among the people of God, was still kept in view.

Besides, Abraham was to be made the *father of many nations* : this cannot respect his natural descendants merely, for those of his posterity who were interested in this covenant constituted only *one nation* : the promise that he should be the *father of many nations*, Gen. xvii. 5. is obviously equivalent to that first made to him when called out of Ur : *in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. In so wide a sense did Paul understand this promise, that he tells us, Abraham was to be *the heir of the world* : Rom. iv. 13. Now since all of whom Abraham is counted the father are his seed, the seed to whom God promises to be a father equally as to Abraham, must include all these many nations, and must ultimately embrace all the families of the earth.

Of this gracious covenant circumcision was the seal : —showing, that as Abraham had been justified by faith, not by works, so every one that believes as Abraham did, shall like him be justified by faith. And consequently, to every one who walked as Abraham

did, by faith, his circumcision was thenceforth a pledge of his own personal interest in the same righteousness by which Abraham had been justified:—and hence the apostle tells us that *the gospel was before preached unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. because* it was foreseen that *God would justify the heathen through faith*: and justification by faith, which is the very marrow of the gospel,—was the grand doctrine taught—and the chief privilege tendered, in the covenant ratified with Abraham, and signified by its seal. The covenant ratified with Abraham and sealed with circumcision, was, therefore, evidently, *a covenant ecclesiastical*; by which God appointed Abraham to be the father of all believers, i. e. the head and representative of the church in all succeeding ages; and conferred upon his family high and peculiar privileges, in which they received a more complete organization than had before been granted to God's people; marking them out more distinctly as one spiritual society, and promising to perpetuate the visible church in that family by lineal descent; with the restriction made by cutting off Ishmael, Keturah's children, and Esau; and the admission of any others who voluntarily chose the God of Abraham as their God, and submitted to circumcision. To them and to their seed after them Jehovah promised to be *a God*, in which promise he virtually engaged to furnish them with every needful revelation of his will, and with the ordinances of his worship, and from among them, chiefly, to take the election of grace. Accordingly Paul says—*what advantage then hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision?* Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were

committed the oracles of God: Rom. iii. 1, 2. The Holy Ghost has thus decided by Paul, that the most prominent benefit certainly accruing from this covenant, was, that it marked out the visible church, and ensured to them the means of grace.* Accordingly

* Against the interpretation of this passage given in our version—it has been said, the true sense of it is “much every way—because that by *them were believed* the oracles of God,—but what if some did not believe?” and that though πιστω and πιστευματα—are sometimes rendered *committed, entrusted, &c.*—yet the antithesis with απιστω—forbids that rendering here. This criticism appears to me incorrect; different verbs are employed in the different parts of this antithesis: the idea seems to be, that the Jews enjoyed peculiar advantages in the possession of *revealed truth*,—and though by many this truth was disbelieved—yet the truth itself remained unimpaired in worth, unshaken in stability, sufficient to render wise unto salvation its possessors, had they rightly improved it. An idea similar to that expressed by the psalmist cxlvii. 19. *He hath showed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation.* The sense given by our translators is adopted and defended by Doddridge and McKnight;—Rosenmüller maintains the same: Επιστηθησαν τα λογια τα θεα. Oracula divina concredita sunt iis:—and on the next verse παρα — καταγνωσι: Quid enim (inde sequitur) si quidam non habuerunt fidem (oraculis divinis,) num istorum perfidia fidelitatem Dei (in servandis promissis) sustulerit?—Fateor, inquit Apostolus, non digni erant Judæi hoc beneficio;—nam major eorum pars semper fuit et nunc est perfida, denegans Deo fidem et obsequium. Sed hoc non impedivit, quo minus Deus staret promissis. Misit Messiam e gente Israeetica oriundum, et nunc etiam Judæi fruuntur hoc commodo, ut ex vaticiniis V. T. facilius discere possint quam Pagani—qualis sit Messias, et qualis vera religio. Matt. xv. 24.—Acts xiii. 45.

In these views the most eminent commentators about the time of the reformation, and the most respectable versions concur,

we find God delighting to make himself known as the covenant God of his people, and of their children with them, since he styles himself the *God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, rather than the God of Enoch, Noah, and Job, though these were equally good and pious men. The seal of this ancient covenant formed

Beza remarks on this passage, “Intellige verò *sic illis commissa Dei eloquia*, non ut alienæ rei depositum, set ut proprium ipsorum thesaurum quo uterentur et fruerentur; unde factum ut reliquos populos ante Christi adventum apostolus ideam *αθεως* vocarit, Eph. ii. 12. Et huc respicit nomen *παγαλατθικης* quo utitur. 1 Tim. vi. 20.”

In the marginal analysis this venerable reformer gives of the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses, he expresses more distinctly yet the views I have advanced in the text, as conveyed in this passage. Pool, in his Synopsis, after citing Grotius, Hoc Judæi habent precipuum quod illis in custodiam data sunt oracula, &c. thus comments on this passage: Eximio hoc honore eos dignatus est Deus, ut essent Verbi sui dispensatores, *custodes, depositarii*; idque ad aliorum usum et commodum, ut solent depositarii. Sic Evangelium apud Paulum et Petrum depositum erat (Gal. ii. 7.) ad usum gentium, et Judæorum. See also, 1 Tim. i. 11, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was *committed* to my trust,” *επιστευθη μοι*. In both these passages the same word is used as in Rom. iii. 2, and it is translated in the same manner.

The same view of Rom. iii. 2, 3, is taken by Jaspis, in his Latin version of the New Testament epistles: his version reads, “Quorsum igitur juvat esse natione Judæus, aut quis redit ex circumcisione fructus? Multus sane; maxime quod Judæis doctrina divina concredita est. Quid enim inde efficitur, si quidam perfide egerunt?” &c. And in a note, he remarks—“Hanc perfidiam declararunt vita scelestâ, inclinando ad idolatriam, repudiando, vexando et interficiendo prophetas. Quæ vero non obstant, ut Deus *stet promissis* ac totam tueatur gentem.” See the edition of his “Versio Latina,” &c. printed at Leipsic, 1793, vol. I. p. 9. This view of Rom. iii. 2, is adopted also by Whitby.

for 2000 years a line of separation, distinguishing the visible church from the world ; within which alone the light of heaven was made to pour down in repeated revelations, while the world around lay shrouded in midnight darkness ; where alone the voice of prophecy was heard—the temple worship was maintained ; where was found the peculiar people—the holy nation—the royal priesthood—whose God was the living Jehovah ; and among whom, perhaps exclusively, was sent down, for so long a period, God's renovating grace :—where alone true piety was found—true saints appeared, such as Samuel, and David, and Daniel, and thousands among the mass of the circumcised :—Hence God says to circumcised Israelites—*you only have I known of all the families of the earth*, Amos iii. 2. Hence by Stephen, the Holy Ghost speaks of *the church in the wilderness*, Acts vii. 38. and hence Paul says of the circumcised seed of Abraham, Rom. ix. 4. *to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises*. Here the apostle states the privileges consequent on their interest in this covenant, as including the revelation of God's will—the enjoyment of his appointed worship, the means of grace, and the advantages of adoption, i. e. they were all regarded as God's visible people, and from among them, almost exclusively, he selected the heirs of life. The Jews then, marked with circumcision, the seal of this covenant, enjoying the revelation and ordinances of God, and spoken of in scripture as the king's daughter, to whom *Jehovah was married*, Jer. iii. 14.—Isa. liv. 5. were a true church. Every circumcised person was

bound to keep God's law, Gal. v. 3. and to be holy : his attending the temple worship, and eating of the passover, was equivalent to a public profession of religion. And accordingly we find that when Jews proved disobedient and wicked, God reproached them by his prophets as covenant breakers and hypocrites, (Hos. xvi. 6. 9. 17.—Ps. lxxviii. 34—37.) The fact then that all Jews were not truly pious, no more proves that the circumcised, as a body, were not the true church of God, than the fact that all communicants at the Lord's table now are not real christians—proves that the body of such communicants, are not God's visible church. Every Jew, in coming forwards to eat the passover, publicly avouched Jehovah to be his God, and promised to observe his statutes ; he put his own seal to God's covenant ; and a christian in coming forwards to the Lord's table, does just the same thing. Accordingly we find, that God required true holiness of every Israelite—“ *Be ye holy for I am holy !*” and he requires no more of christians now, Lev. xi. 44, 45. When they rendered a heartless service, God upbraids them as hypocrites. “ *Your new moons and sabbaths, your calling of assemblies, I cannot away with. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; when ye make many prayers, I will not hear !*” Isa. i. 13. 15. All which shows that God required holiness of heart. and spiritual worship, of every Israelite ; that they who rendered it not were hypocrites, false to their covenant engagements. From which it follows that the covenant was spiritual, in its obligations and its promises, and consequently, that the Jewish church, for

whose continuance and more regular organization provision was made in the Abrahamic covenant, was the true church of God, just as the gospel church now is. All this is rendered yet further apparent from the variety of metaphors employed by our Lord and his apostles, to show the identity of the Christian and Jewish churches ; such as the kingdom taken from one people and given to another, Matt. xxi. 43 ; the vineyard taken from one set of husbandmen and let out to another, v. 41 ; the olive tree, from which some branches were cut out and into which others are grafted, leaving the tree itself unchanged and the same, Rom. xi. 16—24 ; as will afterwards more fully appear. It is not more evident, then, that the gospel church is a true church of God, than it is that the Jewish church, blessed in the Abrahamic covenant and marked with the seal of circumcision, was the true church of God.

Having thus shown that before the time of our Lord a true church was in existence among the Jews, deriving vast benefits from the Abrahamic covenant, I proceed to the second proposition—*The christian church is but a continuation of the Jewish, under the same Abrahamic covenant still in full force.*

The identity of the church under the Old and New Testament dispensations will appear if we consider,

1st. *The covenant with Abraham, in which the Jewish church found provision for its continuance and regular organization, has never been revoked.*

In no part of God's word can a single passage be found to prove that God has set aside this ancient covenant. On the contrary, it is spoken of and reasoned

from in various parts of the New Testament, as undoubtedly continuing in force. The giving of the ceremonial law at Mount Sinai did not repeal this covenant; for Paul tells the Galatians, iii. 17, "the law given by Moses cannot disannul" the covenant made with Abraham, which was four hundred and thirty years before it, and which he declares was confirmed of God in Christ. Nay he asserts that this law was added to further the attainment of things contemplated in that covenant. "The law was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made," v. 19. Nothing can be plainer than this testimony: Christ is the head of all those who by faith become the spiritual seed of Abraham, Gal. iii. 29; and till he should come, the law was added to the original covenant, to mark more distinctly the people from whom he should spring. He being come, the necessity for that distinction is done away, and Gentiles are admitted to membership in the visible church; *that the blessing of Abraham may come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*, Gal. iii. 14: i. e. that Gentiles may partake of those spiritual blessings secured to all interested in that covenant, of which circumcision was the seal. For circumcision was no appendage to the Mosaic law, but to the Abrahamic covenant—"circumcision is not of Moses, but of the fathers," John vii. 22—the patriarchs. The commencement of the Mosaic economy did not annul the Abrahamic covenant; how then can its close affect it? Nay, since the Mosaic law, with its solemn rites and splendid ritual, was an addition subsequently made to the Abrahamic covenant, for the express purpose of the

better securing one particular object proposed in that covenant, (viz. the coming of Christ, the head of the spiritual seed, that through him Gentiles might have access to the privileges of this covenant, be counted as the seed, and partake of the promise,) the termination of that law, and the abolition of its rites, instead of annulling that ancient covenant, furnish fresh evidence of its stability and its gracious design.

But, it is said, the prophets foretold the establishment of a new covenant, under the gospel, and the abrogation of the old one under which the Jews were ; and this old one, it is said, could only be the Abrahamic covenant, which must consequently have ceased, see Jer. xxxi. 32. “ *Behold the day cometh, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, which my covenant they brake,*” and we are then referred to Heb. viii. where the apostle quotes this passage, and argues from it.

It is true the apostle does from this passage argue the abolition of a covenant, which he tells us is now made old and ready to vanish away. But what is that old covenant, of which the apostle speaks ? Not the Abrahamic covenant assuredly ! the prophet furnishes unequivocal proof of this. It was the covenant *made with Israel when God took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt*. It was a covenant that had ordinances of divine service, a wordly sanctuary, a tabernacle, altars, tables, candlesticks, priests, &c. as the apostle shows in the eighth

and ninth chapters of Hebrews. These things appertain to the covenant established with Israel at Mount Sinai; to the ceremonial law, given by Moses four hundred and thirty years after the covenant with Abraham; but they have nothing to do with this ancient Abrahamic covenant, except as supplements *added for a time*; they expired therefore by their own limitation, when the seed should come; leaving, at their abolition, the Abrahamic covenant, to which they had been subsidiary, unrepcaled and unaffected, as their establishment at Sinai left it.

And when the prophet speaks of a *new* covenant to be established, in which God promises to "pour his spirit upon all flesh, and write his law upon our inward parts," this does not abolish the preceding Abrahamic covenant, any more than the establishment of a covenant at Sinai abolished that covenant; which Paul expressly denies. The term *new* is applied in this passage in a *comparative* sense, denoting merely the change made in the administration of the covenant under the gospel dispensation, in the greater spirituality of its privileges, and their extension to all nations. In a similar manner the prophet Daniel tells us, ii. 44, "*In the days of these kings, (i. e. under the fourth or Roman power,) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.*" It is undoubtedly the kingdom of Christ, or the gospel church, that is here intended; and some have not hesitated to argue, that inasmuch as it was then to be *set up*, it could not have existed before; which would show that no true church was till Christ came. But now it is certain Christ did not speak of his

kingdom, as essentially different from what had before existed, but the *same*, only differently administered: *his was the kingdom of God taken from the Jews and given to another nation*, Matth. xxi. 43. The kingdom spoken of by Daniel, therefore, is not, strictly speaking, a new kingdom, but a kingdom then to be set up among a different people, viz. Gentiles, whereas it had before been found only among the Jews.

Another objection against the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant is drawn from Gal. iv. 21—25, where Paul argues that the old covenant which gendereth to bondage is of no more force. But the covenant of bondage, of which the apostle here speaks, is the covenant made at Sinai with the Jewish nation, not that established with Abraham; as the apostle expressly asserts, v. 2. That covenant of bondage made at Sinai is abolished, the law connected with it is done away. But this (as already shown) affects not the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant. On the contrary, in the very spirit of the doctrine here contended for, the apostle proceeds (in the fifth chapter) to show that God's people are delivered from the bondage of that law, and made children of the free-woman, (i. e. heirs of the promise made by covenant to Abraham, as was Isaac, the son of the free-woman,) "waiting for the hope of righteousness through faith," chap. v. ver. 5; in other words, permitted to entertain the hope of that gospel before preached to Abraham in the covenant made with him, the substance of whose promise is "justification by faith." For, *a covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ* (for the benefit of the

children of the free-woman,) *the law* (of bondage) *which was* (given at Sinai) *430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect,"* Gal. iii. 17. A fair examination of this common objection, only ends as before, in showing more fully, that the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the termination of the covenant of bondage connected with it at Sinai, impair not, but establish the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant. No where, then, can evidence be found in the word of God, that this ancient covenant is annulled ; and if so, it must still remain in force.—iii. 18, 19.

This is yet further apparent—*Because that covenant contains promises which could never be fulfilled, but under the Christian dispensation.*

“ In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” Gen. xii. 3—a father of many nations have I made thee !” xvii. 5, never could be fully accomplished, so long as the administration of the covenant was confined to one small nation. In Gal. iii. the apostle tells us plainly this promise respected the Gentiles, “ the scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed,” Gal. iii. 8. Accordingly the apostle asserts that Christ came and delivered us from the curse, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles ; drawing this conclusion, which must be pertinent so long as a gospel church remains on earth. “ If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” If, then, the people of Christ are the

seed and heirs of Abraham according to the promise, the Abrahamic covenant to which that promise was annexed, is still in force, and must continue in force so long as there shall be found on earth those who are Christ's, whether Jew or Gentile. But if believers now are interested in the same covenant, and entitled to participate in the same blessing, as believers of old, the church now is the same, as under the Old Testament dispensation, however changed its external ordinances. It stands deeply interested in the same covenant, and is essentially the same church.

But the identity of the church under the Jewish and christian dispensation, is argued not only from the perpetuity of the covenant with Abraham, but also,

2d. *From the several figures used by our Lord and his apostles, manifestly intended to teach this very truth.*

The prophets of old already intimated this, in the promises they recorded of the enlargement of Zion by the bringing in of the Gentiles, Isai. xlix. 14. 22, liv. 5. Gal. iv. 27; promises never fulfilled if the christian church be not the same as Zion of old. Our Lord shows that the change of dispensation leaves the church, or kingdom of heaven, essentially the same, when he compares the church to a vineyard, taken from one set of husbandmen and let out to another, Matth. xxi. 41, to a kingdom, taken from one people and given to another, Matth. xxi. 43. So the apostle, Heb. iii. 1—6, compares the church to a house, in which Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a son.

In Gal. iv. Paul compares the church to an heir who continues the same through all the disciplinary process of his pupilage, till he arrive at maturity. He

is not one person while under tutors, and a different person when entering on his inheritance ; but the same. So the church, founded on the covenant with Abraham, is the same church, whether under the law as a schoolmaster, with carnal ordinances, or enjoying the perfect liberty of the gospel of Christ.*

The same truth the apostle teaches the Ephesians : when writing to them he says, Eph. ii. 12. of the Gentiles, they were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*, and represents them as divided by *a partition wall*, v. 14. from the church of God among the Jews :—this middle wall of partition, the apostle tells us, is now broken down by Christ, v. 14.—the Gentiles are brought nigh, v. 13.—they are *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, of the household of God*, v. 19.—growing together into *one holy temple*, v. 21.—Eph. ii. 18, 20.

* The celebrated Robert Hall, late minister of the Baptist Society of Cambridge, England—and now pastor of the Baptist Society worshipping at Broadmead chapel, Bristol,—a man deservedly admired for his profound thought, his commanding eloquence, and the unrivalled richness and beauty of his writings, virtually admits the existence of a true church among the Jews, and the identity of the church, under the former and the present dispensation, agreeably to what is here contended for—when, after stating the points of resemblance, and of difference, between the Jewish purifications, the baptism of John, and christian baptism, he remarks, towards the close of section 1. part I. of his piece on Terms of Communion, “ It seemed suitable to his (our Lord’s) wisdom, by such gentle gradations, to conduct his church from an infantine state, to a state of maturity and perfection ! ”—In the New-York edition of works of Rev. Robert Hall, &c. 1830.—Vol. I. p. 40.

The church that had so long enjoyed the advantages provided in the Abrahamic covenant, is not here spoken of as destroyed, and succeeded by another ; but her limits are removed, her boundaries extended, and those who before were strangers to her privileges are brought near, introduced among her saints, and made fellow-heirs with them ; which is precisely the reverse of that mode of speaking that would be appropriate, if the ancient covenant, by which the church had so long enjoyed the advantages of regular organization as a visible body, had been annulled, and a new church now set up.

The same truth is taught in Rom. xi. where, under the emblem of an olive tree, the church is denoted. That nothing else can be meant by the emblem of the olive tree, is plain ; for, under the same emblem, the visible church is spoken of by Jeremiah, xi. 16. *The Lord hath called thy name a green olive tree ; fair and of goodly fruit. With the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled a fire upon it, and the branches thereof are broken.*" It is the sin of forsaking the true God for Baal, to which the prophet refers ; and the sin of unbelief is noticed by the apostle in the use he makes of this figure in Rom. xi. where he is treating of the rejection of the Jews for *unbelief*, and the calling of the Gentiles by *faith* into the church. This good olive tree cannot be intended to denote the ceremonial law, for that was done away ; and there can be no excision from privileges that have come to an end ; moreover to the privileges of the ceremonial law Gentiles have not been admitted, for those privileges have ceased. By this figure nothing else can be in-

tended but the peculiar relation of the Jews to God, as his people, the visible church, enjoying the means of grace, in virtue of the Abrahamic covenant. The natural branches of this good olive tree were the Jews: these are broken off on account of unbelief. The Gentiles, as branches of a wild olive tree, are grafted into this good olive tree among the natural branches, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the tree; *i. e.* of the privileges secured to the church by the Abrahamic covenant. The change of dispensation under the gospel is here then compared to pruning out dead or unfruitful branches, and inserting others; but the tree is not rooted up; no other is planted in its place; it still remains the same tree; natural and ingrafted branches now grow on it together;—*i. e.* the same church continues: some Jews are rejected for unbelief;—in their room Gentiles have been admitted to the church; and the time will yet come when the Jews will believe, and by faith be reinstated in the same church. But if the gospel church be not essentially the same with the Jewish, founded on the same ancient Abrahamic covenant, it must be quite another church, and in that case, the Jews can never be reinstated in their ancient privileges in the church; they must, on believing, be introduced into a church in which they never had a place. Which certainly would not be like grafting them back again into their own olive tree. No language could more unequivocally show than does the figure of the olive tree, employed by the apostle, that the church of God continues essentially the same, notwithstanding the change of dispensation, partaking, to this day,

of the privileges secured by the ancient Abrahamic covenant.*

* The sameness of the church under the Old and New Testament economy, notwithstanding the change of dispensation, is a vital point; it is indeed the turning point of the whole controversy. Little more than fifty years ago, the opposers of infant baptism did not deny that the Jews were a true church: they then rested their cause exclusively on the want of a plain scriptural warrant for infant baptism, and the incapability of infants to repent and believe. But when by the celebrated Peter Edwards, the instability of this ground was shown, a Mr. Jones (as it is said,) first denied the existence of a church before the day of pentecost; and baptist writers have followed in his track ever since; denying at the same time, the interest of the christian church in the covenant with Abraham. This strikes against the very vitals of religion; it strips us at once of all right to every single promise of the Old Testament, which were all but parts of the benefits accruing to the seed of Abraham in virtue of that covenant. But it is vain to deny the existence of a *church of God* under the Old Testament dispensation, or its continued existence now, though under a new dispensation; like an heir released by his coming of age, from the restraints of pupilage. The apostolic emblem of the good olive tree, undergoing a change only in its branches, clearly shows this. So plainly is this the meaning of that figure, that a recent baptist writer,* who denies that there was any *visible church* before the day of pentecost, but only† the visible state of the Jews, formed into a *peculiar nation* at the foot of Mount Sinai, *entrusted with the oracles of God, with public means of grace, and regular religious instruction*, tells us when speaking of the metaphor of an olive tree.‡ “This good olive tree denotes the visible state of the Jews, as a nation worshipping the true God in the *enjoyment of the means of grace*, which may well be styled the root and the fatness.”

From this many of the Jews were cut off, and have continued

* Frey's Essays on Baptism, first edition p. 67. † p. 93. ‡ p. 94.

That the christian church is but a continuation of the Jewish, is argued, *thirdly: from the absurdities*

“for ages destitute both of public and private means of religious instruction, whilst multitudes of the gentiles were united with those Jews who embraced the christian religion. The olive tree or congregation of Israel, was neither plucked up by the roots nor cut off, but only underwent a change in some of its branches. Since this change took place, the olive tree is no longer called the *congregation of Israel* or of the *Lord*, but the *christian world*; for it includes all that are born of christian parents or become proselytes, without respect to their moral character,* just as it was with the Jewish nation. But here is the difference: since the change has taken place in the olive tree, the King of Sion has given instructions to his disciples to *separate* themselves from the *congregation*, and to form themselves into a distinct society called the *church*, and thus openly and visibly profess their devotedness to Christ.”

In this remarkable paragraph we have granted all that we want; the olive tree, he asserts, denotes the visible state of the Jews as a *peculiar people entrusted with the oracles of God, with public means of grace, and regular religious instruction*, n. p. 93. But what is a visible church, if a peculiar people entrusted with God's oracles, with public means of grace and regular religious instruction, be not such a church? More especially, when these privileges have been granted under a covenant, in which God promises to be the God of that people, and of their seed? This visible society was the olive tree. The same tree subsists, changed only in its branches, by the admission of Gentiles. The Gentiles therefore, having now the oracles of God, means of grace and religious instruction, are at this day the olive tree, still partaking of the root and fatness, just as did the Jews of old; and all their children are with them partakers of the same fatness, as among the Jews

* It may be worth while to compare this assertion with the known fact, that all Israelites guilty of gross offences, were to be cut off from the church. See Ex. xxii. 20. Lev. xxiv. 15, 16, 17, xviii. 29. Ex. xxxi. 14. Ex. xxi. 15. 17. Levit. xxiii. 29, 30. Num. ix. 13. xix. 20. Num. xv. 30, 31. Deut. xvii. 12, 13.

that follow its denial ; for then the christian church has no connexion with the people of God before the coming

formerly. This is all that we contend for, and it only remains to ascertain how the children formerly became visibly incorporated in the same tree, (viz. by circumcision,) and then, further, to see that baptism is the christian circumcision, as will soon be shown ; and then we have the full concession even of a baptist writer, to the identity of the visible christian and Jewish church state ; the membership of infants, and the scriptural warrant for infant baptism. The *thing* is granted, simply from the overwhelming weight of evidence ; the *name* alone is denied, simply from love of hypothesis. After granting that the olive tree denotes *the Jews as a visible society, enjoying divine oracles, and ordinances, and instruction*, it is a mere play on words to call them the *congregation* of the Lord, deny that they were a church, and then assert that the olive tree, as now including gentile branches, is the *christian world*, not the *gospel church*. It might call for some ingenuity to explain what is meant by the *christian world*. The truth is, the term church, *church of God* as used in the New Testament, answers exactly to the Old Testament phraseology, *congregation of Israel, congregation of the Lord*. The apostles were Jews, who applied Jewish phrases to gospel things ; and we cannot obtain a correct understanding of New Testament terms, but by comparing them with the correspondent ones found in the Old Testament.

Mark now the absurdities which follow a denial that the olive tree denotes the visible church itself. This writer tells us, since the change has taken place in the olive tree, the King of Sion has given instructions to his disciples, to separate themselves from the congregation, and form themselves into a distinct society, called the *church*, p. 94. The olive tree, you remember, he told us, denotes the congregation, the disciples are the branches. Therefore, these branches are grafted by God into the olive tree, not to remain there, (by no means, its fatness is not enough for them,) they are to separate themselves from the tree into which they have just been grafted, and form themselves into another

of Christ, and can claim no interest in any of the privileges they enjoyed, or in any of the promises made to them.

It was in consequence of their covenant relation to God as the seed of Abraham, marked with the discriminating seal of that covenant, that the Jews were treated and spoken of as God's people ; hence to them as one visible society revelations were sent, ordinances of divine worship were appointed, and promises were given. These were not given to the elect as such ; (this were impossible without a special revelation to each individual,) it was to the church, as a visible society in covenant with God ; no man, nor company of men, could ever claim an interest in any of the promises or blessings, but as a part of the one visible church. But if the gospel church be not essentially the same as the Jewish, it must be, either because the Abrahamic covenant applied to the Jews alone ; and then none but a Jew can have a right to a single Old Testament promise (which is manifestly untrue, because that covenant expressly included all nations :)

distinct society, i. e. into another tree ! How natural an interpretation ! Branches grafted into a tree, that, self-moved, they may forthwith separate themselves from the tree, provide themselves with a trunk and root and fatness, and become another tree ! A conclusion, to avoid which, such absurdities must be resorted to, is irresistible. The Jewish congregation was the true visible church of God. That church still subsists, enlarged it is true by the admission of the gentiles ; but its root is the same, the covenant with Abraham ; its fatness the same, the privileges secured by that covenant ; only, now made richer still, by the clearer light, stronger motives, and freer grace of the gospel !

or else it must be because that covenant has ceased to be in force. But if so, all the promises made under the operation of that covenant (and made surely to those alone who were interested in that covenant,) are come to an end : in that case, they have no longer any force ; they can be claimed by no soul living, Jew or Gentile. If this be true, then no promise found in the psalms, or the prophets, or any where in the Old Testament, can be pleaded any more. The widow cannot plead that Jehovah will be a God to the widow, or that he will be a father to her orphan children. If this is so, the dying father has often pleaded without authority, and in vain, the promise, *leave thy fatherless children to me*, Jer. xlix. 11. *I will keep them alive!* Then too, christians plead in vain the promise, that the time shall come, when *the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord*, Isa. xi. 9. If that ancient covenant be repealed, then believers are not *Abraham's seed* and heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 29. They can have no connexion with Abraham at all ; contrary to the apostle's assertion. If so, the church is not a holy temple, including both Jews and Gentiles, built upon the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*, Eph. ii. 20, 21. Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. She is built on the apostles, but not on the prophets ; notwithstanding what Paul says. And if so, she has nothing to do with the promises given under the Old Testament dispensation ; though Paul assures us, *all* the promises are to believers, yea and amen in Christ Jesus ; because he teaches us that all who are in Christ, are of consequence Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. To such

absurdities, unscriptural and appalling, are we driven, by denying the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, and the identity of the gospel and the Jewish church.

To sum up the whole argument at one view. The church received her fuller organization by the covenant ratified with Abraham, about four thousand years since. That covenant has never been annulled : it remained unaffected, alike by the institution of the ceremonial law of peculiarity among the Jews at Mount Sinai, and by the abrogation of that law at the death of Christ : and it contains promises which can never be fulfilled, unless it be still in force. That covenant, then, stands good : the church found therein, provision made for her continuance, and for her being supplied with outward ordinances, and with special grace. So long as that covenant stands, the church founded thereon is the same. A conclusion borne out by the reasoning and the various expressive figures employed by our Lord and his apostles ; and further confirmed by the absurdities apparent on denying that the christian church is essentially the same as the Jewish : since it would strip us at once of all right to the promises contained in the Old Testament. The church of God, therefore, survives all the changes of dispensation uninjured, and unaltered as to her essential features.

We advance now to the third argument for infant baptism, viz :

III. *Infant membership in the church of God once established, never revoked, is still in force.* Once granted that the gospel church is only a continuance of the Jewish, and this conclusion follows irresistibly. Some

privileges may be enlarged, and others added ; but the church is unaltered, her rights remain unimpaired ; unless God her king himself repeal them.* God did once confer on the children of his visible people, the right of admission into the visible church in early infancy ; for in making the covenant with Abraham, God expressly required its seal, circumcision, to be fixed to infants ; Gen. xvii. 12. Now Paul teaches the spiritual meaning, and binding force of circumcision. It bound all the circumcised to keep the law, Gal. v. iii. Of course every one circumcised in infancy by God's command, was bound, as soon as he attained a suitable age, to keep God's whole law. At a suitable age they must go up to Jerusalem and keep the passover, or be cut off as breakers of God's covenant. They were, therefore, by circumcision introduced into the visible church, and laid under obligation to perform all the duties of church members, Lev. xxii. 9. Num. ix. 13. And into this church membership they were, by divine direction, brought in infancy. As the church continues still the same, this privilege, so many ages ago conferred on the infant seed of the church, *is still theirs of right* : and it must continue theirs, till an enactment shall be produced, from the statute book of heaven, rescinding that right. Never yet has such prohibition

* On the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the ordinance of the passover was instituted ; but this affected not at all the obligation to receive circumcision, nor the right of any to admission into the church, to whom that right had once been granted, *for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, i. e. God is not fickle, nor inconstant : he does not change his mind ; first conferring, and then wantonly recalling his favours.

been found. Not a hint is given in the New Testament that the right of infants to church membership is taken away. As it had already long existed in the church, if it was to continue, no new direction on that head was needed. If it was to cease, explicit directions to that effect must have been given. The silence of the New Testament on this subject, is, therefore, equivalent to a full proof, that the infant children of God's people are not only capable of church membership, just as they were of old, but that they are entitled to such membership, by the appointment of God, undeniably made, never revoked. How infants are to be admitted, is a question afterwards to be examined; the decision of which, however, can no way affect their *right* to admission.

IV. A fourth argument for infant baptism is, that since the infant children of believers are still to be admitted to membership in the church of God; they must be baptized: *for baptism is the christian circumcision*:

If circumcision had not been abolished, the arguments thus far adduced would show, our children ought to be *circumcised*. That they must be baptized, not *circumcised*, rests for its authority on the proof that *baptism is substituted for circumcision*.

That this is true, appears, first, *because baptism is now, as circumcision was under the former dispensation, the discriminating mark applied to the members of God's visible church*. So familiar was the idea of the distinctive nature of this ordinance, as pointing out the difference between the church of God, and the world lying in wickedness; the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Satan; that not only was every male Israelite to be

circumcised, the uncircumcised were to be cut off as breakers of God's covenant ; not only do we find circumcision spoken of as *rolling away* the reproach of Egypt, a heathen land, from the Israelites when they came under Joshua to Gilgal, Josh. v. 9. but throughout the scriptures, we find the visible people of God called *the circumcision*, heathen *the uncircumcision*. So Paul says, "the apostles at Jerusalem saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter," Gal. ii. 7. i. e. that I was commissioned to preach the gospel to the heathen, as Peter was unto the Jews ; and in the two following verses, the *circumcision*, is a term again used, as synonymous with Jews, or the visible church of God ; the *uncircumcision*, as interchangeable with gentiles, or heathen sustaining no such covenant relation to God. But under the New Testament also, the church has, from the first, applied to her members, a discriminating mark in *baptism*. The members of the visible gospel church are persons who have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity. For disobedience to God's precepts, baptized persons may be cut off from participation in the privileges of the church ; their baptism is not indeed thereby rendered invalid, they are not re-baptized on their return with penitence ; no more were persons who had been excommunicated for sin from the Jewish church, thereby rendered uncircumcised ; if readmitted on their repentance, circumcision could not be renewed on them. Still, the circumcised, as a body, were God's visible church ; and the baptized, as a body, are now the church. The uncircumcised of old,

had no connexion with God's church : the unbaptized now, have no connexion with the church. As circumcision was of old, baptism is now, the distinctive badge, to mark the church of God from the kingdom of Satan.

But further, *As circumcision was of old, so baptism now is, the initiatory rite of the church of God.* It is not merely a mark found on all the visible church ; it is an ordinance, the administration of which *introduces* them into the church. Under the former dispensation, before he was circumcised, no man had any right either to eat the passover, Exod. xii. 48. or to enter into the sanctuary, Ezek. xlv. 9. or to offer sacrifice to the Most High. But the passover, and worship in the sanctuary, were privileges appertaining to the *church* : while uncircumcised, no man had access to them, for he was still out of the church. Circumcision entitled him to participate in them ; because by circumcision he was brought into a covenant relation to God, and became a member of the church. In like manner, no unbaptized person has access to the christian passover, the Lord's supper ; for he is not of the church. To approach that ordinance, among christians of any denomination he must be baptized. When Christ commanded his apostles to go, preach the gospel, and make disciples ; they must baptize them into the name of the Holy Trinity. And we find that wherever they went, when men professed faith in Christ, they baptized them, men and women. Cornelius, Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and the 3000 on the day of pentecost, although many of them (like the twelve believers Paul found at Ephesus,

Acts. xix. 1—5.) had doubtless been baptized by John the baptist, yet on their professing faith in Christ, they must all be baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity. Then, and not before, they became members of the christian church, and had thenceforth access to all its privileges. So that, just as circumcision was of old, baptism now is, the *initiatary* ordinance of the church. It is, as one has well expressed it, *swearing them in*, to be citizens of that community, of which God is the king and lawgiver.

But this substitution is argued, thirdly *From the revealed fact, that baptism, in the gospel church, denotes precisely the same spiritual change that circumcision did, in the Jewish.*

Some would degrade the rite of circumcision to a mere carnal ordinance, a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, a token of interest in temporal promises only; and they assure us, that its design was *chiefly*, to distinguish the Jews from all other nations. It did, indeed, answer all these ends; yet not only, nor *chiefly*. The chief design was spiritual, it imported the *putting away the body of the sins of the flesh*, Col. ii. 11. and baptism imports the same thing now, as the same text shows us.*

Circumcision denoted inward holiness; it was a seal of the righteousness of faith; a token to every Jew,

* Indeed a recent baptist writer has felt himself constrained to admit that Col. ii. 11, 12. teaches that baptism and circumcision answer one another, their design is the same. This concession he makes, in saying that Venema, though a pædobaptist, acknowledges it, Frey p. 55. This is in fact too plain to be denied.

that he was required to attain that righteousness which is by faith, as Abraham did ; to acquire and maintain that *purity of heart*, which is the fruit of true faith : Hence the promise found in Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." This gracious promise every true Jew could claim ; for Paul tells us "*he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart ; in the spirit, and not in the letter*, Rom. ii. 29. In short, circumcision denotes neither more nor less than *regeneration* : and *baptism* now denotes the very same thing. Thus Ananias said to Paul, "*arise, be baptized and wash away thy sins*, Acts. xxii. 16. Implying that baptism denotes purification from sin ; So Peter (1 P. iii. 2.) tells us "*baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*," i. e. baptism is not an unmeaning ceremony, a mere external washing, but it is significative of inward purification. Hence christians are said to be *baptized with the Holy Ghost* : buried with Christ by baptism into death, Rom. vi. 4. raised to newness of life : crucified unto sin, 6 ; They are said, by baptism to have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. Paul tells the Ephesians (v. 26.) Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word* ; and to Titus (iii. 5.) he declares, "*God saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*. All which goes clearly to show, that *baptism* is designed to represent *regeneration*, or the purification of the

heart by the Holy Ghost ; just as circumcision did of old. Indeed, so obvious is this design of baptism, that most of the early christian writers call baptism *regeneration* ; and they seem often to have regarded baptism as being rather *regeneration itself*, than the sacramental sign of it. An error which some are said to hold to this very day.

But let it be observed, 4thly. *Circumcision is now laid aside by the authority of God, and baptism is appointed by the same authority.* That circumcision is abolished, none will deny. The Holy Ghost saith, *is any called in uncircumcision ? let him not become circumcised !* Cor. vii. 18. And on the authority of the head of the church, by whom circumcision was appointed, and then abolished, much about the time of its abolition, baptism, intimating the same things, and answering the same ends, was appointed, as the ordinance by which alone persons are introduced into the church ; representing symbolically, as circumcision did of old, that spiritual cleansing which is wrought in the true Israel by the Holy Ghost. Surely this shows something like the substitution of baptism for circumcision.

Observe then, 5thly, *Circumcision was to the Old Testament church the seal of the covenant on which her blessings were founded, and the gospel church is established on the same covenant. If, then, baptism be not substituted in the place of circumcision, the covenant of God with his church is left without a seal.*

We have the authority of Paul for calling circumcision a *seal*, Rom. iv. 11. a token of the righteousness of faith ; which was the grand doctrine taught, the grand blessing conveyed, in that covenant, to which

circumcision was appended as a seal. Under the Old Testament, circumcision was a significant token appointed of God, to remind every member of the visible church of this grand doctrine : and to every Israelite who became a true believer as Abraham was, his circumcision was to him God's seal, assuring him that he was blessed with faithful Abraham ; like him freely justified by faith.

The church still lives. We gentiles are now admitted to membership, and to a participation in all the privileges of the *same covenant* : but circumcision is no more ! Is then that covenant, the blessing of which is come on the gentiles, now destitute of a seal ? It cannot be ! The same authority that laid aside circumcision, has appointed baptism ; the abrogation of the former, and the institution of the latter, were simultaneous : as the one was laid aside, the other was introduced. The same things intimated by the former are denoted by the latter. As the former when applied to any person introduced him within the bonds of God's covenant, so the latter introduces persons to a participation in the privileges of the same covenant. As the latter is spiritual in its import, equally spiritual was the former ; and though the former was frequently abused, misunderstood and misapplied, equally capable of abuse is the latter. Every thing which could be imagined necessary to constitute the one a substitute for the other is here found ; leaving it next to impossible to doubt, on attentive consideration, that baptism is verily the appointed seal of God's covenant with the gospel church, as circumcision was with the Jewish. Accordingly we

find the Apostle Paul reasoning in a manner accordant with this idea. Under the Old Testament, it was by circumcision that men became members of one body, the visible church ; under the new, by *baptism*, as in 1 Cor. xii. 13. *by one spirit ye are all baptized into one body*, i. e. just as baptism brings us into the visible church, the thing signified by baptism, gives us membership in the invisible. Again Gal. iii. 27. *as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ* ; i. e. the thing signified by baptism renders us members of Christ's spiritual body, just as the outward ordinance of baptism brings us into membership in his visible body, the church ; and he adds, *If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*. Baptism, as we have just seen, is a visible putting on of Christ : it is by baptism we become Christ's, as members of his visible body ; by baptism then we are introduced among the visible seed of Abraham, and are marked or visibly sealed as heirs of the promise made to them as a visible society ; i. e. *baptism is now the seal of the covenant* originally made with Abraham, and still in force in the church, just as of old circumcision was that seal. That this being Christ's by baptism, and this heirship with him, are properly spiritual in their meaning, no more affects the reasoning which shows baptism to be a seal of the covenant, substituted in place of circumcision, than the fact that outward circumcision was not circumcision of the heart, and that without inward circumcision, *Jews were not all Israel, that were of Israel*, (Rom. ix.) not heirs to the spiritual blessings of Abraham's covenant, would show

that circumcision was not the visible seal of that covenant. The two ordinances are strictly parallel ; outward as administered by men, and outward seals of the same covenant ; but denoting spiritual affections, to which alone the fulness of the spiritual blessings appertained. This close parallelism only shows the more clearly that *baptism is now substituted for circumcision, as a seal of God's covenant with his visible church.*

But 6thly, *analogy furnishes us with another argument for this substitution.* In the Old Testament church were two standing ordinances ; *circumcision*, once to be administered to every one at his introduction to the church ; and the *passover*, to which every circumcised person, and such alone, were to be admitted ; and which was frequently to be celebrated. In like manner, in the gospel church are two ordinances only ; baptism to be administered but once to each individual on his admission to the church ; and the Lord's supper to be frequently celebrated by those only who have been baptized. The passover prefigured redemption to be wrought by the death of Christ, as well as commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Lord's supper commemorates the same redemption accomplished by the death of Christ, and it prefigures the fuller enjoyment of its benefits by believers in the kingdom of God above. Now the Lord's supper has, in the gospel church, taken the place of the Jewish passover, as Paul shows, in calling it the christian passover, (1 Cor. v. 7.) We might then infer that as the Lord's supper is the christian passover, so the ordinance

which must be received prior to a participation of the supper, must have been appointed in place of that necessarily prior to the passover of old ; more especially when these two ordinances, more manifestly than the two former, signify the same thing ; and baptism was instituted as an initiatory ordinance, just at the time when the other ceased. The probability appears strong, therefore, that as the eucharist is the christian passover, baptism must be the christian circumcision :

But we have more than probability for,

7. *We find that once at least in the Scriptures, baptism is expressly called circumcision ; thus in Col. ii. 11, 12. we read, "In whom (i. e. Christ) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism :"* The context shows, that the apostle is opposing the sentiment of those who taught the continued necessity of circumcision ; this necessity he denies, on the ground that believers are already circumcised, with christian circumcision, or *baptism* : for by the circumcision made without hands, Jewish circumcision cannot be meant ; because that was, of course, performed by the hands of the priests : his meaning he himself explains, telling us that the circumcision of which he is speaking consists in "*putting off the sins of the flesh,*" i. e. regeneration, or that inward cleansing which is signified by baptism, and which is actually found in every believer, "*circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism :*" According to all the established laws of interpretation, the latter clause must

be regarded as exegetical of the former ; and the passage not only teaches that *baptism* answers to *circumcision*, (which even baptists admit, as we have seen,) not only that the design of the two ordinances is the same, baptism being now the appointed token of the same inward purity which circumcision formerly represented ; but *it does positively call baptism, the circumcision of Christ, or christian circumcision* ; and on this substitution of baptism for circumcision, rests the argument of the apostle in that passage, which is this ; that since christians are spiritually circumcised in baptism, they have no need of the outward circumcision made with hands, to be a type of that purity.*

* We have already noticed the admission of a baptist writer, that baptism answers to circumcision : And yet it is painful to observe the disingenuousness of some who would evade the force of scriptural evidence. The same writer, when commenting on the phrase (Col. ii. 12.) *risen with him through faith, &c.* remarks, p. 54. "the persons here spoken of were *adults*, who *believed*, and this passage has therefore nothing to do with infant baptism." This remark the writer makes while attempting to show that baptism is not a substitute for circumcision, although, we contend, that very passage virtually asserts that it is. The simple question here at issue is, does the Apostle in that passage speak of baptism as importing the same as circumcision ? Does he call it *circumcision* ? No matter whether in the particular case of which he is speaking, baptism were administered to adults or infants, to believers or to those who could give no evidence of faith, if he calls this ordinance *christian circumcision*, (as he plainly does) that is enough, the point is settled ; the question respecting the application of baptism to infants, is an entirely distinct thing, to be settled on other ground.

An instance of similar inattention to the proper point of in-

And hence also we find, that just as of old, God's people were called the *circumcision*, as we have already seen, so, as if purposely to show that in becoming Christ's by baptism, we become the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, just as of old men did by circumcision; i. e. to show that baptism now takes the place of circumcision; Paul says, (Phil. iii. 3.) "*beware of evil workers, beware of the concision*, (i. e. of those who insist on continuing circumcision in the flesh, though we are circumcised with christian circumcision, which is baptism,) *for we are the circumcision.*" As if the Apostle would say, though to obtain a title to the blessings promised in

quiry we have in the same writer, (Frey p. 54, 55.) when referring to 1 Pet. iii. 21. he remarks, "There was some similarity between circumcision and baptism; and some infer that therefore baptism takes the place of circumcision. We know too there was some similarity between Noah's ark and the ordinance of baptism: do any of our brethren therefore believe that baptism is come in place of Noah's ark?" Such strokes may do to catch the inconsiderate; but they weigh nothing with sober inquirers after truth. The difference between the two cases is wide. Noah's ark, though an emblem of the shelter found for the church in Christ, with whom baptism brings her members into visible connexion, was no ordinance of the church: but circumcision and baptism are two ordinances of God's appointment; the former ceasing as soon as the latter was instituted; the latter denoting the same things, substantially, that the former did; and the latter called in Scripture, by the name of the former; for baptism is by Paul expressly called circumcision; but Peter never so calls Noah's ark. If baptism be called christian circumcision, plainly it holds the same place in the christian church, that circumcision did in the Jewish. It is the seal of God's covenant substituted in place of circumcision.

the covenant, its seal, (which was circumcision,) must be affixed to us ; yet the bloody rite is no longer necessary, for gospel circumcision has been applied to us in our baptism ; we are therefore, the circumcision ; the church, sealed with that ordinance appointed under the gospel instead of circumcision ; the christian circumcision, which is baptism. Avoid, then, the *concision* ; those who would impose on you a second circumcision, rendered needless by the first. This passage derives its whole point from the truth that baptism is the christian circumcision, the gospel seal of the Abrahamic covenant. But to the admission of this substitution it is objected.

1st. *The Jews who were converted to the gospel faith were baptized, though they had been previously circumcised*, which would seem to imply that baptism was not appointed a substitute for circumcision.

True it is that circumcised Jews, on embracing christianity, were baptized ; but the conclusion does not follow. When they were circumcised, circumcision was the proper initiatory rite of the church ; when by God's authority circumcision was laid aside, and baptism appointed, they submitted of course to this new mode of initiation. Had they not been required to receive baptism, it would have shown that baptism had not superseded the old rite. A new ordinance was now substituted in place of an old, by the head of the church : had they refused submission to this new law, on the ground of their compliance with the former, this would have been rebellion that must have cast them out of God's church, as it did the unbelieving Jews. Abraham was a member of

God's church, before circumcision was made the initiatory rite ; yet he received circumcision, just as if, before, he had been an unbeliever, no way connected with the church. As members of God's church, circumcised Jews were bound to obey the laws of the church ; and when new truths were revealed, and new ordinances appointed, they must believe the former, and submit to the latter. It may as well be argued that the Lord's supper is not substituted for the passover, because they who had partaken of the passover, sat down to the supper, and yet often celebrated, afterwards, the Jewish passover. Also,

It is objected, 2dly. *Timothy was circumcised after he had been baptized ; surely this shows the substitution contended for is not true*, Act. xvi. 3.

I answer, there is no evidence at all that Timothy ever was baptized. He was young, the son of a Greek or heathen man. Paul found him well instructed in the Scriptures, and pious. Designing to take him with him and employ him in gospel labours, on a profession of his faith he received him into the church, initiating him by *circumcision* instead of baptism, (on account of the strong prejudices of the Jews, whose souls he would benefit ;) applying, in this case, the old seal, instead of the new. The case of Timothy, therefore, furnishes evidence in favour of the sameness of baptism and circumcision, not against it ; since it shows, that although baptism is now the proper ordinance, yet the administration of circumcision, as of old, was still tolerated in certain cases.

It is objected, 3dly. *This substitution cannot be true, for women are baptized, but were never circumcised.*

The answer is obvious, the nature of the ancient ordinance forbade its application to them: but they were always considered as included in the male head, and circumcised with him; for it was expressly said "*no uncircumcised person shall eat of the passover*;" Exod. xii. 48. yet women ate of it: which shows, undeniably, that they were regarded as circumcised persons, and as such entitled to all the privileges of the covenant.

It is objected, 4thly, *If baptism be really substituted for circumcision, how comes it that when the churches sent up to Jerusalem, to inquire whether Christians ought to keep the law and be circumcised, the Apostles in answer said nothing about this substitution?*—Acts, xv. 22—30. *If they had only told them, baptism is now come in the place of circumcision, it would have settled the whole dispute at once and for ever.* But this objection, formidable as it is in appearance, has no real force. If the Apostles had returned such an answer, it would have met only half the inquiry, which respected the whole ceremonial law, not circumcision alone. They gave a wiser, because a more appropriate answer: "*It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things*"—Acts xv. 28: then declaring circumcision and all mere legal rites no longer needful: and from this very answer, the substitution here spoken of might be fairly inferred. In its proper place, this substitution is plainly taught by the Holy Ghost, when baptism is called christian circumcision. (Col. ii. 11, 12) and the christian church is designated *the circumcision*, Phil, iii, 3.

To deny the doctrine, because not expressly asserted in that one particular place, is hardly consistent with the reverence due to the divine Author of the Scriptures. So satisfactory to the ancients was the evidence of this substitution, that Justin Martyr (who flourished about a century after the Apostles) tells us expressly, that baptism is to the christian church, the same thing that circumcision was to the Jews ; and he makes particular mention of some who had been baptized in infancy.

Let us then bring the whole train of argument in review before us. The church of God has continued identically the same, notwithstanding the change of dispensation : she has always applied a discriminating mark to her members, in circumcision of old, in baptism now. As circumcision was formerly the initiatory ordinance of the church, so baptism now is : baptism now denotes the same inward purification, of which circumcision was formerly the appointed token : circumcision was abolished, and much about the same time, baptism (answering the same ends) was appointed by divine authority. Further, since the church is organized under the very covenant of which circumcision was formerly the seal ; that rite being laid aside, if baptism be not its substitute, the church is now organized under a covenant destitute of a seal ; while Paul reasons from baptism, just as if it were the seal. Moreover, the Lord's supper, being substituted for the Jewish passover, analogy would seem to require that baptism, an ordinance prior to the former, must be a substitute for circumcision, which was an indispensable preparation for the latter. And

still further, the Holy Ghost styles baptism the christian circumcision, and calls the christian church *the circumcision*, just as the Old Testament church was called the circumcision ; and affirms that her members need no Jewish circumcision to entitle them to a participation in the benefits of the great Abrahamic covenant, because they are already circumcised in being baptized. Each of these arguments has its weight ; several of them are individually strong, and nearly satisfactory. But the evidence of this cheering truth, like that of the inspiration of the Scriptures, is cumulative ; it proceeds step by step ; and the effect of the whole combined, is quite satisfactory. The conclusion is clear and undeniable.—“ *Baptism is to the gospel church, what circumcision was to the Jewish—a seal of the Abrahamic covenant ;*” and few are the truths borne out by clearer or more copious evidence.

Some have said, show us a single passage of Scripture which asserts that baptism is a substitute for circumcision, and we will believe it ; not otherwise ! I answer : the substitution in question is asserted as a truth of revelation. Like any other truth, it may be shown in any of the various modes of reasoning employed to gather truth from the sacred oracles. To demand an express assertion of it in so many words, is an impious attempt to prescribe to God in what way he shall make known his will. The Sadducees might as well have demanded of Christ an express assertion of the doctrine of the resurrection, in the books of Moses. The Saviour proved it by inferential reasoning ; and blamed the Sadducees for not having inferred it also. And by many and various proofs we have

shown that the doctrine of the substitution of baptism for circumcision, is scriptural and true : and if so, as the children of believers were, of old, admitted to the church by circumcision, so must they now be admitted by baptism. For if it be right to admit them at all, it must be done either by baptizing them, or without it. But none can be admitted into the christian church without baptism : therefore, to admit children to membership in the visible gospel church, they must be baptized.

A 5th argument for infant baptism, is found in the *language of Christ, the conduct of the Apostles, and various allusions found in the epistles.*

On one occasion our Lord said, *suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven*—Matth. xix. 14. Oh, but Christ did not baptize these children, say some, he only blessed them, so that this passage of scripture has nothing at all to do with baptism ! True, our Lord did not baptize these children ; but he did more than bless them : he declared that children must not be kept from Christ ; and the reason he assigns is, *of such is the kingdom of heaven !* If this mean the church in glory, then, since infants are fit to be admitted there, why not to the church on earth ? But the phrase, *kingdom of heaven*, usually denotes *the visible church* ; and such appears to be its meaning here. If so, then in this passage Christ does declare that the visible gospel church includes infants, (these were *infants*, very young children, $\beta\epsilon\tau\epsilon\phi\eta$, such as he could take in his arms—Mark, ix. 56, and Matt. xix. 13—15,) which certainly favours the doctrine of infant baptism ; for,

how can those be *of the church*, who have no right to be baptized ?

We do not build infant baptism on this insulated passage, (as some of its opposers would insinuate :) but when we find, where no immediate reference to baptism could have been intended, such incidental remarks so plainly falling in with our views of baptism, where is the absurdity, or the *weakness*, of pointing it out, as "*confirmation strong*," that we are right !

The conduct of the Apostles in baptizing whole households at once, better accords with the views of those who practise, than of those who reject infant baptism. When we find recorded the baptism of Lydia's household on her believing, and of the jailer's on his believing, no hint is given of any thing extraordinary in these cases. The record is made just as if it were the ordinary custom of the Apostles, on baptizing the head of a family, to baptize with him his whole household of children. But now, in the accounts received from baptist missionaries to the heathen in our day, do we ever hear of similar baptisms of whole households ? How long might we wait, before the excellent missionaries of that denomination would send us intelligence, that on preaching the word in such a place, such a man believed and was baptized, he and all his household, straightway ? If a case occurred, in which, consistently with their views, they could baptize a whole household at once, how explicit would be their statements to show that each member of that family professed faith in Christ ! Equally explicit, we should suppose, would be the statements furnished in the New Testament on this point, to guard against mistakes, if

after believers in the true God had, for so many ages, been permitted to consecrate their children to God in a solemn religious ordinance, they were permitted to do so no more. The several accounts found in the New Testament of the baptism of households, without any hint of such restriction to believers alone, does, therefore, strongly corroborate the opinion of those who hold infant baptism to be scriptural.

But again : in the writings of the Apostles, we find passages sustaining these sentiments. Thus Paul tells us he baptized the household of Stephanus—1 Cor. i. 16 : and to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vii. 14) he speaks of children in a manner accordant with the sentiment expressed concerning them by our Lord—“*of such is the kingdom of heaven.*” He supposes the case of a family in which one parent alone is a believer. The children of parents, both of whom are heathen, are manifestly heathen, unconnected with the church. Where both parents are believers, their offspring are children of the covenant, and entitled to the privilege of consecration to God. But if one parent be an unbeliever, the faith of the other parent affects the unbelieving parent so far, that the offspring of both are holy ; and the unbelieving parent is so far to be regarded as holy, that he may, by this marriage, be the parent of children who shall be consecrated to God. Dr. Gill, and most baptist writers with him, maintain that the holiness here spoken of, respects the lawfulness of the marriage, and the legitimacy of the children. The answer is obvious. The word is never known to be used in that sense elsewhere ; besides, it would be making the Apostle argue the lawfulness of the mar-

riage from the legitimacy of the children ; which were, in fact, proving a thing by itself!

The word HOLY is often employed by the New Testament writers as equivalent to *clean* : to denote what is, or may be, consecrated to God : *unclean*, what may not. So in Peter's vision on the house-top, by the words, "*what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common nor unclean*"—Acts x. 15, he was taught that gentiles might be admitted to the *gospel church and its ordinances*. They were no longer *unclean*, or to be debarred from those ordinances.

Paul teaches also, that the faith of even one parent, takes away from the unbelieving parent, that uncleanness which would else debar his children from being consecrated to God ; and from the children, that uncleanness, which, without the faith of one parent, the unbelief of the other would entail upon them, to deprive them of that right. Yet it by no means follows, that if, in this passage, holiness in the children means a right to baptism, holiness in the unbelieving partner must imply a similar right. The sanctification here spoken of, is a meetness for the purposes appertaining to each. In the unbelieving parent, to be a channel through whom the children may receive unimpaired, for the believing parents' sake, the right of admission to the privileges of the covenant : and in the children, to be personally consecrated to God in the initiatory ordinance of his church. Another interpretation has recently been given to this text,* in which no little

* Dagg's note in Pengilly's Scriptural Guide to Baptism.

labour and some ingenuity have been employed to show, that in this passage, HOLY means merely, *not liable to pollute* ; or to impart ceremonial uncleanness. There is, however, one small objection to this interpretation ; which is, that it deprives the Apostle's language of all meaning : it makes the holiness he speaks of, mean just nothing at all. For, under the gospel, no such defilement is contracted by intercourse with any man, heathen or infidel, more than with a Christian. And if this be all the Apostle here teaches, that the holiness of the unbelieving husband of a believing wife, consists in not polluting the believing parent or their children, with ceremonial uncleanness, then this holiness is no more than what the most degraded pagans possess ; and if so, it is really an unmeaning sentence—"The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy"—for, on this supposition, the parties have no more influence on each other than on any other persons on the globe, or any other persons on them. The only rational interpretation is that of *federal holiness*, as the people of God, admitted, (the unbelieving parent in his children, the children for themselves) to an interest in the covenant and its privileges. If so, this passage fully accords with the views of those who hold to infant baptism.

The language of our Lord, the conduct of his apostles, and various allusions found in the epistles, do, therefore, all accord with the doctrine of infant church-membership, and consequently, of infant baptism. So also does,

Lastly, *The testimony of church history as to the practice of early Christians.*

In treating of this topic, I must necessarily take my authorities from others, on whose judgment and honesty reliance may safely be placed ; since the works of the early christian fathers are now rarely to be found but in the libraries of public institutions ; to which few, comparatively, can have access : yet are they sufficiently accessible to every inquirer, to render the detection of imposition certain.

Justin Martyr, about the middle of the second century, tells us of some of both sexes, then sixty or seventy years old, who had been *made disciples* in childhood : doubtless he means baptized. He also speaks of baptism as having come in place of circumcision, and to be received instead of it.

Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was the companion of the apostle John, and who was born before the close of the first century, tells us of *infants who were born again unto God*. By *born again*, Irenæus, with nearly all the early fathers, means *baptized* : this, no one acquainted with church history will deny. He testifies, therefore, to the fact, that then persons were baptized in infancy ; and whether his views of the efficacy of baptism be right or wrong, his testimony to the *fact* of infant baptism remains unimpeached.

Tertullian, about a hundred years after the Apostles, speaks of the *custom of baptizing young children* : he advises to delay it, on account of the temptations to which young people are exposed : for Tertullian evidently had an idea, that sins committed after baptism are more heinous than before. But his whole manner of speaking of infant baptism, shows that it was then the prevailing practice. If Tertullian could have

shown that infant baptism was unscriptural, not warranted by the example of the Apostles, he would unquestionably have done so.

Origen, a very learned christian writer, born towards the close of the second century, declares, "*according to the usage of the church, baptism is given even to infants.*" He expressly asserts, that the custom was received from the Apostles.

Some of our baptist brethren, I cannot but think, employ unfairness in the use they make of the testimony of the early Christians. Thus one asserts,* "*Origen is the first who declares infant baptism founded on apostolic authority.*" Perhaps, literally, it is true, that Origen is the first who makes this formal declaration. But the manner in which this is stated, is such as to leave an impression on the minds of the incautious, that Origen, in the third century, is the first who mentions infant baptism; whence the conclusion is easily drawn, if infant baptism is not mentioned before the third century after Christ, it must be a new thing; it is an innovation. But this conclusion is false. The truth is, infant baptism is very plainly alluded to, and expressly mentioned, very soon after the times of the Apostles, and in such a way as to show that it was a general custom in the churches. If infant baptism had been a new thing, unknown in the apostolic churches, it is utterly incredible that no where should there have been found any one to lift up his voice

* Frey's Essays, first edition, p. 69. The fact is, that the very first mention found of baptism in christian writers, shows that it was then the prevailing practice.

against it. And yet, Pelagius, in the fourth century, whose peculiar sentiments the denial of infant baptism, would have greatly countenanced, could that denial have been safely made, unhesitatingly declares, "Men calumniate me, by charging me with a denial of infant baptism. *I have never heard infant baptism denied even by the worst heretics.*" Pelagius was not only a very profound scholar, and a very acute reasoner, but he had also travelled extensively through Britain, Gaul, Italy, Africa, Egypt, and Palestine; yet he solemnly declared he had never heard infant baptism denied.* Who then shall decide what was the primitive practice, if these christian writers, from almost the time of the Apostles, till the middle of the fourth century, shall not do it? They, as with one voice, assure us, that from the first, infant baptism was practised, and continued to prevail: not a single denial, not a single dissenting voice, from those early ages, has come down to us. All this is utterly inexplicable,

* The writer has examined the "Letters of David and John," containing animadversions on Dr. Woods' Lectures on Infant Baptism; and while he admires the excellent spirit pervading that production, he cannot but think that injustice is done, unintentionally he believes, to some of the writers there alluded to, and to the subject discussed. Whatever errors may have been held by some of the ancient fathers, they surely are competent witnesses in relation to facts. If abuses had already crept into the church, and the ordinances were perverted by admixture with these abuses, that is surely no reason why, if we receive their testimony as to the *subjects* to whom those ordinances were applied, we should perpetuate also the abuses into which they had fallen.

unless it had been customary in the churches planted by the Apostles themselves, to recognise the interest of infants in God's covenant with his people, and receive them into the church by baptizing them; a custom which prevailed universally in the church till a little before the middle of the twelfth century, when one sect of the Waldenses declared against infant baptism, because they believed them incapable of salvation; yet the great body of that people rejected this new tenet. This opinion was again embraced by the Mennonists, or Anabaptists, a fanatical sect that arose in Germany about A. D. 1530. The denial of infant baptism was never heard of in the christian church, (saving only by some wild enthusiasts, who rejected nearly the whole gospel,) till the twelfth century; and that tenet never spread beyond the territory of the Waldenses, till the sixteenth century. (*See Dwight, Vol. IV. p. 337.*)

Since, then, it has been shown that God had a true church on earth before the coming of our Lord, to which many valuable privileges were secured by the Abrahamic covenant; that that covenant being still in force, the christian church is but a continuance of the Jewish; that infant membership, having been once divinely established in the church, and never laid aside, must still be in force; and that, under the gospel, baptism has been appointed as a substitute for circumcision; the conclusion is abundantly plain, that *Infants must now be baptized, as of old they were circumcised.* A conclusion which is fully sustained by the language of our Lord respecting little children; by the baptism of households, as recorded in the New Testament; and

by the directions given to the Corinthians respecting those children, one only of whose parents was a believer : a conclusion that is further corroborated by the unequivocal testimony of christian writers relative to the practice of the primitive churches, during the first four centuries ;—all showing, that the refusal of the Waldenses in the twelfth century, and of the Mennonists and Anabaptists, in Germany, in the sixteenth century, to baptize infants, was an unheard-of and unscriptural innovation, which is not rendered right or scriptural by its having been more extensively spread during the last three hundred years ; nor by the general excellence of that body of Christians who now maintain it, nor by their strict adherence to scripture in other respects.

I proceed then to notice the objections usually urged against the practice of baptizing infants.

It is objected, first, *Baptism is a positive institution. Of all positive institutions, (the obligation to observe which rests, not on the nature of things, but solely on the authority of the lawgiver,) the law of the institution is the only rule of obedience. Hence, whoever has a right to a positive ordinance, must be expressly mentioned as having that right. But infants are not so mentioned with respect to baptism ; therefore infants are not to be baptized.*

If this argument have any real force, it will exclude all females from the ordinance of the Lord's supper ; since there is no mention made of females admitted to this ordinance, either in the words of the institution, or in any part of the New Testament. Their right can indeed be clearly made out ; but it is done by inferen-

tial reasoning, which, if this objection be valid, is completely excluded. Yet in baptist churches they are admitted, just as they are in others, though there is no warrant for it in the law of the institution, nor any command for it, nor any clear example of it, in all the New Testament. The truth is, this objection is sophistical. The authority of God is indeed the sole foundation of a positive ordinance, but the mere words of the *institution* are not the *only law*. The whole word of God is *that law*, and whatever can be gathered from any part of the whole Bible respecting any positive institution, is the law of that institution : it is God's revealed will respecting it. When light has thus been collected from various parts of the lively oracles, and brought to one focus for the elucidation of any institution, we are not adding to, nor taking from, nor any way altering a positive institution. All the show of argument which is sometimes exhibited on the subject of positive institutions, is nothing to the purpose. The most that it can do, is to show that Christ's authority is our only guide. We have no right to set up an institution not appointed in Scripture ; nor to neglect, or alter, after our own fancy, any one that is appointed. It shows, that from the Scriptures alone we must gather direction ; but it does not show, that from the mere words used at the time of instituting the ordinance, nor even from scriptural examples alone, we are to be guided, to the exclusion of inferential reasoning.

It has been said, "the law of a positive institution must be so plain and explicit as to stand in no need of any other assistance to understand it, but *the mere letter of the law* : and that it is *blasphemy to suppose*

that Christ delivered his mind in ambiguous words."* If the law here spoken of, denote the whole word of God, it is substantially true ; though the expression, the *mere letter*, must be taken in a modified sense : but if, as was doubtless designed, the *mere words of the institution* be intended by that law, it is not true ; and the history of the Apostles shows that it is not. In the commission to baptize, Christ, as his apostles understood him at the time, said nothing about baptizing Gentiles. The book of Acts shows, that the Apostles understood the charge, "*teach all nations, baptizing them,*" &c. to mean only Jews, as parts of the different nations among whom they lived, and whose languages they spoke. But when they found Gentiles believing, and on Gentiles the Holy Ghost poured out, they gathered, not from the words of the institution, but by *inference* from these facts, that Gentiles, on believing, were fit subjects for baptism. In like manner, if we take *the law of the institution*, in the only proper sense, for the scriptures of truth, we have, in the very law of the institution, *what is equivalent to an express warrant for the baptism of infants*, when we are told, that the blessing of Abraham (which respected infants with their parents) is now come on the Gentiles—Gal. iii. 14 : and when we are further assured, that baptism is christian circumcision—Col. ii. 11, 12. If baptism had not been appointed, and the Apostles had been commanded, "*circumcise all nations,*" unquestionably they would have circumcised infants as well as adults, unless expressly prohibited ; because they had always

* Frey, p. 13, 14.

seen children dedicated to God in this ordinance ; and when commanded, “*baptize all nations ;*” and one of the apostles declares that baptism is christian circumcision—Col. ii. 11, 12 ; what room is left for doubt, (no direction being given against baptizing infants,) that the Apostles did baptize infants, just as they would, in the former case, have circumcised them ?

An objection, then, which would vacate at the sacramental board the seat of every female communicant ; which would condemn the conduct of Peter, and the other apostles ; an objection, which derives even its show of force from a subtle sophism, is not very formidable.

A second objection is, *The Scriptures require faith and repentance in order to baptism ; but infants have not faith nor repentance, therefore infants are not proper subjects of baptism.*

This argument, like the former, overshoots the mark, and proves too much. If, because faith is sometimes placed before baptism, as when it is said, *he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*—Mark xvi. 16 ; infants must be excluded from baptism, because they are incapable of faith ; then, for the same reason, because in another place it is said, (2 Thess. iii. 10) “*If any man will not work, neither shall he eat,*” it follows undeniably, that sustenance must be refused to the sick, and to all infants, because they are incapable of labour ; and the command is explicit, requiring *labour* before a person may eat. This reasoning, every one sees to be absurd in the case of sustenance, and it is equally absurd in relation to baptism.

It follows also, if the argument urged in this objection be valid, that all dying in infancy will be eternally

lost ; for it is said, “ He that believeth, shall be saved, he that believeth not, *shall be damned.*” Faith is here placed before salvation ; the want of it is expressly declared to entail perdition : so that by this reasoning, all who die before they become capable of believing, are inevitably lost. Nay, if some who have not been baptized in infancy, should in early life, repent and believe, but should die before they could receive baptism, this argument would consign them too, to perdition ; for the Scripture says “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved”—Mark xvi. 16 : and although in other places faith alone is mentioned as a prerequisite to salvation, yet inasmuch as baptism is once, at least, expressly so mentioned, it must, like repentance, be always understood as being required, even though not mentioned. Moreover, on the ground assumed in this objection, it would follow, that if, as some maintain, there be but one only scriptural mode of baptism, and that mode be immersion ; then all who have not been baptized by immersion, are not baptized at all ; and not being baptized, must be inevitably lost, be they never so eminently holy and devoted to God ; a conclusion that would seal over to destruction such men as Owen, and Baxter, and Brainerd, and Henry Martyn.

We might as well undertake to argue, that no man can be regenerated till he has been baptized, because in John iii. 5, we read, “ Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” where *water* is mentioned before the Spirit ; as to argue, that none but believers ought to

be baptized, because it is said, “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”

The truth is, this whole objection is based on an argument radically defective, because, like the preceding one, it brings into the conclusion, infants, with whom the premises have nothing to do.

“*He that believeth and is baptized,*” shows, that all believers may be baptized : it does not show that no others may : “*If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,*” respects, and it can only respect, those capable of exercising faith, i. e. adults. It has nothing to do with infants, and ought never to be adduced in a discussion relating to infant baptism alone.

A 3d objection is, *There is no scriptural example of the baptism of any but on their own profession of faith.*

In answer, I would remark, that the very principle on which this objection is based is erroneous ; that principle is the assumption that “*we are not at liberty to do that for which we have no scriptural example,*” which is manifestly untrue. We have no scriptural example for the admission of believing women to the Lord’s table ; yet who doubts the propriety of admitting them ? But if this objection has any force, they ought *all* to be excluded. Throughout the whole New Testament can be found no example plain and undeniable, of a woman’s partaking of the Lord’s supper. I know it has been asserted that such example is found ; but let it be shown where. That such example cannot be found, is abundantly plain, if it were only from the ridiculous, and of course abortive effort so often made, to prove, that when Paul says, let a *man* examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.

1 Cor. xi. 28, he does in the term man include women! This is something like inferential reasoning respecting a positive institution; and I most cheerfully acknowledge the propriety of inferential reasoning respecting positive institutions, and the subjects of them, if such reasoning be properly conducted. But *reasoning* is not producing a plain undeniable example from the sacred record.

Again, we have no example in Scripture for even the *baptism* of any female who is not the *head of a household*. Lydia was the head of a household: and though at Samaria, on the preaching of Philip, (Acts. viii. 12.) they were baptized both men and women, how can we decide that any other women than heads of families, like Lydia, were among them? We may suppose so; we may reason, and infer that it was probably so; but this is not producing a plain scriptural example. Are we then to refuse baptism to single women, even though they give good evidence of faith? If the principle on which this and the preceding objection are founded be true, then no woman, however firm her faith and exemplary her life, can be lawfully baptized, unless she be the head of a household like Lydia; and if she be not baptized she cannot be saved. This is very much like determining, with the papists, that marriage is a sacrament; yea going beyond them, and making it a sacrament indispensable to salvation; a necessary preliminary.

But, even were the principle correct on which this objection rests, still the objection itself is a gratuitous assumption; it is in fact a mere denial of one of the main points in debate. For if any one of the house-

holds whose baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, did contain children under age, the objection falls at once. This is therefore reduced, in great measure, to a question of probabilities ; and it is certainly more probable that in the four households so mentioned, there should have been persons too young to act for themselves, than that there should not. The history of the baptism of whole households, when nothing is said of the faith of any except of the head of that household, is certainly more favourable to the views of those who practise, than of those who deny, infant baptism.

The case of the Philippian jailer, Acts. xvi. 34. deserves examination. Paul preached to him and to all in his house ; but not a word is said of any one believing, except the jailer himself ; yet he was baptized, he and all his straightway. Our version reads, "*and he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house !*" Acts. xvi. 34 ; but in the original the participle *believing* is singular, it relates only to the jailer ; it can relate to no other : he himself believing, leaped for joy, his family sympathizing in his joy ; for they with him, and as a consequence of his professing faith, had been admitted by baptism, to membership in the visible church. If this view of the passage be correct, then it is not true that we have no example in Scripture of the baptism of any, except on a profession of their own faith in Christ ; and the objection dies.*

* As to the phrase, Acts xvi. 34, *καὶ ἡ ἀλλήλας τοῦ παντοῦ πιστὸς* *ὡς*, I am aware that a different construction is given to it by many eminent critics, even among pædobaptists, in accordance

It has been asserted that Lydia's household, who were baptized with her, must have been adult believers, because it is said (Acts xvi. 40.) that when released from prison, Paul and Silas entered into Lydia's house, *and saw and comforted the brethren* before they departed. But it does not follow that these *brethren* were those of her household, there is no evidence that they were. Under the peculiar circumstances in which Paul and Silas were about to depart, it would have been strange indeed, if they had not collected around them the young converts from different parts of the city to the house of Lydia, where they staid, to give them a parting exhortation. This account is throughout consistent with the doctrine of

with our version. Rosenmüller says, "Participium hic causam reddit, (viz. gaudii janitoris.) Ideo, (adds this author,) gavisus est, quod non ipse tantum, sed et tota ejus familia tanta luce perfusa esset." This expression is equivocal, *luce perfusa esse*, is not precisely to believe, but to be surrounded with the truth as with light. Yet I doubt not the opinion of this learned writer is, that the adverb πανοικι, bears on πιστευκας, rather than on ηγαλλιασας, a construction not uncommon in the New Testament. In this interpretation I find that Erasmus and Grotius concur: Doddridge also seems to favour this interpretation. To authority so respectable, great deference is certainly due; and yet I acknowledge that I am not satisfied by it; the construction appears to me forced and unnatural; and I find that Dr. Guyse felt the same difficulties against its adoption. His note on this passage is, "one sense that I have given of this passage, is according to Mr. Henry's observation that it may be read, 'He, believing in God, rejoiced all the house over,' πανοικι, he went into every apartment expressing his joy. And it is evident that the words (ηγαλλιασας ο πιστευκας) *he having believed, rejoiced*, express only his own, and not his family's faith and joy."

infant baptism. While the case of the jailer, affords, at least, strong presumption of the baptism of members of a family of whose faith we know nothing, in consequence of the faith of the head of that family.

It is objected, 4thly, *Infants can derive no benefit from baptism ; their baptism is of no use, and therefore cannot be of God's appointment.* But this objection bears with equal force against infant circumcision. Baptism now denotes inward cleansing, so of old did circumcision. No more is said of baptism, than is said of circumcision : it was *a seal of the righteousness of faith.* Paul says, "circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law ; but if thou break the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Rom. iii. 25. For I certify to *every one* that is circumcised, that *he is a debtor to do the whole law.* Gal. iv. 3. No stronger language is any where employed respecting baptism. How plausibly, then, might it have been argued, that infant circumcision was needless, because it must be unprofitable, since infants could not keep the law. But God decided otherwise, in directing that infants be circumcised : and in so doing, God has decided that *infants may be proper subjects for the reception of an ordinance, even though many things connected with that ordinance apply only to adults, and not at all to persons in infancy.* An objection which thus charges foolishness on God, must be powerless.

It is objected, 5thly, *Infant baptism is professedly founded on the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, a transaction recorded in Genesis, which can have no relation to a New Testament ordinance.*

This objection is gravely urged by Dr. Ryland, a Baptist minister at Bristol, (Eng.) a learned, and generally a candid man. But this objection is really founded on the same fallacious argument before noticed, viz. : *that the mere letter of the law is our only guide in regard to positive institutions.* If, by the mere letter of the law, be meant the testimony of God in his word, the maxim is true ; but then Genesis is a part of that law. But if it mean, *merely the words uttered at the time of the institution of the ordinance*, then it is not true. Our Lord once washed his disciples' feet, concluding with saying, "*If I, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet ; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you*"—John xiii. 14, 15. Here is the plain letter of a command for a positive institution. Do, then, they who contend for the *mere letter* as our only guide, regard this as a third ordinance in the christian church, and follow the administration of the Lord's supper by the pedilavium, or washing of each other's feet ? No, they *reason*, that the design was simply to teach Christians a lesson of humility and mutual kindness ; and in this reasoning we coincide. But such reasoning is not obeying the mere letter of the command : it sets the letter wholly aside. Again, Peter had heard the command *to teach and baptize all nations* : but the mere letter was not sufficiently plain to direct him. He did not suppose that it authorized him to baptize gentiles. So that, when he was to go to Cornelius, God sent a vision to teach him. But even that vision did not bring to him a plain command, respecting either teaching, or baptiz-

ing gentiles. *What God hath cleansed that call not thou common*, Acts x. 15, was the voice from heaven. Presently, messengers from Cæsarea, summoned him to Cornelius; and he must *infer*, first from the vision, that he might preach to and baptize gentiles; and then, from the gift of the Holy Ghost poured out on Cornelius's household, that to them the ordinance might properly be applied. God himself, then, required Peter to *reason* and to *infer* respecting the subjects of baptism, where the mere letter of the institution failed to guide him. But if it was lawful for Peter thus to be guided by inferential reasoning, why not for us? And why may we not reason from the Abrahamic covenant, to the ordinance of baptism; or from any part of the Bible whatever, if it can be shown to have a bearing on the subject, as well as Peter might from the vision of the sheet, in which not one syllable was uttered respecting either preaching or baptism? We may also add, that if those who now deny infant baptism, cannot, (as they tell us) feel the force of an argument drawn for it from the Abrahamic covenant, or from the book of Genesis, Paul could. In Galatians, third chapter, he reasons from the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, and the effect of baptism as an open union with Christ, to show that baptism entitles us to a share in the blessing promised, in that covenant, to Abraham's seed. *The blessing of Abraham is come upon the gentiles through Jesus Christ; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ: and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise!* Every way then the objection

is without foundation ; and so long as the third chapter of Galatians stands in my Bible, I must believe that there is a connexion between baptism and the covenant with Abraham, and that to argue from the one to the other, is scriptural and safe.

One more objection is sometimes urged, viz. :

6. *That the advocates of infant baptism are very much divided among themselves, as to the relation in which baptized children stand to the church.*

But it is abundantly clear, that difference of opinion as to the practical consequences of any doctrine, can never affect the truth of the doctrine itself ; cannot invalidate a single argument by which it is supported. Difference of opinion among men on some points, does not prove that the doctrines they hold in common are not true. Else the papists are right, when they assert that the divisions among protestants, prove all protestants alike in error, in their renunciation of popery.

The arguments usually urged against infant baptism have now been honestly and fairly stated ; and it has been shown that they are, without exception, void of force, and for the most part sophistical. All objections being thus removed, every argument that has been adduced, bears with undiminished weight directly in support of infant baptism. And since the objections against infant baptism are literally of no force, even if the arguments in its favour were not absolutely conclusive, if they amounted *only to a probability*, that probability weighing only on one side, with nothing, absolutely nothing, to oppose it on the other, ought to decide every conscientious christian to

seek, by consecrating his children to the God of Abraham in baptism, to obtain for them a participation in that covenant blessing secured to the faithful, in the promise, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee in their generations*. Lest haply, he be found a contemner of God's own ordinance, and a covenant breaker, in violating, (ignorantly, perhaps, through prejudice, but still guiltily,) the engagements implied in his own baptism.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

I PROCEED now to consider the mode of baptism, or the manner of applying water in this ordinance.

Baptists contend that *immersion*, or plunging the whole body under water, is the only scriptural mode : and they appeal to the meaning of the word *baptize*, to the cases of baptism recorded in the New Testament, and to allusions found in the apostolic writings. Let us examine each of these points separately.

The word baptize does not mean to immerse only ; there is indeed a word in Scripture, βαπτω, which properly signifies to *dip* or immerse ; and had that word been used by our Lord, dipping in water would have been the only proper mode of administering the initiatory ordinance of the church. But our Lord uses baptize, βαπτίζω, which is a different word ; the proper meaning of which seems to be, to *wet*, to *cleans*e by *wetting*, or to *wash* ; which may be done in any one of the ways of plunging, pouring, or sprinkling. In Heb. ix. 10, we read of *divers washings*, (Greek,—divers baptisms,) which refer to the various ablutions, or ceremonial cleansings, prescribed in the *Mosaic law* ; but these we know were performed in different ways, chiefly however by *sprinkling*, Numb. viii. 7.

xix. 18—21. Lev. xiv. 7. It has indeed been said by one recently,* “Every Jew knows, that whatever is to be purified by *water, whether cups, tables, beds, &c. it must be by immersion.*” And in another place he says, p. 103, “The purifications by water, to which the apostle alludes, were *all* by immersion,” referring us to Lev. xi. 32. Now compare this assertion with Numb. viii. 7. which describes how the Levites were to be purified, “*Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.*” Here the *persons* themselves are to be shaved and *sprinkled* only, not immersed; their *clothes* alone were to be washed: So in Lev. xiv. 7, the leper when cured, in order to be cleansed, must go to the priest, who “*shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean.*” Here then are at least *two* cases in which cleansing was to be performed by sprinkling, not by immersion. Again, when vessels and tents, &c. had been polluted by a dead body, a clean person must *sprinkle the tent, vessels, &c.* with water containing the ashes of a red heifer, and thus were they cleansed, Numb. xix. 18. But the Apostle had in view especially that purging, or cleansing which was performed by *sprinkling with blood*, as appears from v. 19. 21. These *sprinklings*, as well as ablutions of all other kinds, the Apostle *calls baptisms*: which could not be, if baptism were never any thing but immersion.

* Frey p. 101.

In Mark vii. 4. we read of the washing of *cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables* ; the Greek word here translated, *washings*, is *baptisms*. Cups and pots and brazen vessels might have been washed by immersion ; though it is not likely that even these would always be plunged wholly under water : but as to the *tables*, or rather beds or *couches*, used to sleep on at night, and lie on at full length, at meals, and on each of which three persons usually reclined at once ; it is utterly incredible that they should have been cleansed by immersion. The law prescribed sprinkling for tents ; and the Jews often practised washing by a sponge. But this washing of beds, whether by sprinkling or sponging, Mark calls *baptism* ! It certainly was not immersion : Mr. Frey quotes (p. 101.) a saying from the Jewish rabbins, “ *A bed that is wholly defiled, if he dips it part by part, it is pure.*” Obviously this refers to extraordinary cases, not to the purification commonly employed. But would such dipping, by part at a time, be regarded by Baptists as proper immersion ? Would they baptize by dipping first one part of the body, and then another ? Would this comport with their favourite language, going down into a watery grave ? Most plainly, the baptism of the tables, here spoken of, is not the immersion for which Baptists contend.

Luke tells us, xi. 38, that the Pharisees marvelled that Christ had not first washed (the Greek is, had not first *been baptized*,) before dinner. Now what kind of washing, before eating, was practised by the Pharisees ? Mark tells us vii. 3. *the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not.* A compari-

son of these two passages clearly shows, that a person who had washed only his hands, was yet *baptized*; for Luke expressly says of such a person, *he is baptized*. Assuredly, then, to baptize does not, (in the New Testament at least,) mean *merely to immerse*.

And it is remarkable that Origen, a most accurate Greek scholar, when speaking of Elijah's (1 Kings xviii. 33,) pouring water on the altar in presence of all Israel, and the priests of Baal, says he *baptized* it : Homer also in a mock-heroic poem, when speaking of a *lake* tinged or discoloured with the blood of frogs, uses the same word, it was *baptized* with blood. To *baptize* cannot, then, mean only to *immerse*; its true meaning is to tinge, to dye, to wet; and because washing or cleansing is performed by wetting, it is used to express all the various modes of *washing*, whether by plunging, pouring, or sprinkling; and baptism may with propriety be administered in any one of these ways.

This further appears from the *signification of this ordinance, and the figures employed in Scripture to express the thing signified*. Baptism, we have seen, denotes inward cleansing, which is effected by the Holy Ghost; "*by one spirit we are all baptized into one body*," 1 Cor. xii. 13. He shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost, Matt. iii. 11. Now the gift of the Spirit is never spoken of as immersion, but as a *pouring or shedding forth, a sprinkling, a coming down like rain*. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, Isa. xlv. 3. Then will *I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean*. Renewing of the Holy Ghost, which was *shed on* us abundantly, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. He shall come down like *rain* upon the mown grass, Tit.

iii. 5, 6. The Holy Ghost is said to be poured out, shed down, Ps. lxxii. 6. sent like rain upon men, sprinkled like water; and they who thus receive the Holy Ghost are said to be *baptized*, with the Holy Ghost. What does this teach, if not that pouring or sprinkling is *baptism*? And if the *sign* should represent the *thing signified*, water may properly be poured or sprinkled in baptism, to represent truly the cleansing influences of the Holy Spirit, which are said to be poured, shed down or sprinkled on men; but never are men said to be immersed in the Holy Ghost.

To the same purpose is that prophecy respecting Christ, "*so shall he sprinkle many nations*, Isa. lii. 15. As it respects spiritual mercies, it denotes the gift of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of Christ's blood on men's hearts for purification. As it denotes the outward sign of this blessing, the prophecy is descriptive of the admission of people of various nations to the gospel church, in their being baptized by *sprinkling*. Except in this way of baptism by sprinkling, this prophecy has not been, and never will be, literally fulfilled. It seems, viewed in connexion with the other prophecies just adduced, to show that sprinkling is the preferable mode of baptizing: especially as this mode directly reminds all beholders of the ancient mode of purifying the unclean under the law; and also of the application of Christ's precious blood, which is said to be done by sprinkling, Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.

It cannot, then, be shown that immersion is the only meaning affixed, in the New Testament at least, to the

word baptize ; or that the Scriptures require *immersion* in this ordinance. *We conclude, therefore, that the particular mode in which water is to be applied in baptism, is a matter of secondary importance.* Had this been essential, doubtless the directions would have been as clear and minute, as the prescriptions for any rite under the ceremonial law. For any men to insist so strenuously on a particular mode, when God has left it undecided in his word, is not in the spirit of the gospel.

But it is said, the circumstances attending the baptisms recorded in the New Testament, show that baptism must then have been performed by *immersion* !

Jesus himself was baptized by John in the river Jordan, Matt. iii. 15. John had already baptized in *Jordan* the multitudes who came to him from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and the region round about, confessing their sins ; and we are told expressly, v. 16, *Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water* ; and Baptist writers, when adducing these passages, generally take care to have printed, in large letters, the words *in Jordan* ; *went down into the water*, and came up *out of the water* ; that their readers may be sure to notice them. This is unworthy of a christian writer. The river Jordan had very high banks ; after the rainy season the river rose so as to fill its outer banks. In summer it was a shallow stream, confined within the inner or lower banks. Those who approached the river in dry weather, must of necessity descend these outer banks to get to the water's edge, even if they only entered a few steps. To baptize in the river, comported with John's habits as a dweller

in retired places ; it was suitable to the climate, the heat of which rendered frequent wetting of the feet agreeable. But if he baptized, by pouring, or sprinkling in *the river*, all that is said about *going down to* or *into* the water, and *coming up out of* the water, would be equally natural and proper, as if he baptized by plunging. *And I hesitate not to assert, no man can prove that either John or the Apostles baptized by immersion.* Men may regard it as probable ; but probability is not proof : and for any to *assume* that one mode only was employed, and then demand that all should comply with that mode, while they can produce neither express command, nor an undeniable example of baptism by immersion in all the Bible, is rather a bold stand to take ; especially for those who insist that, in a positive ordinance, the law of institution must be our only guide ! Show from the Scripture, that immersion is positively required as the only proper mode of baptism, and we will receive it and abide by it. Show that Jesus was baptized by immersion, or that the eunuch was, and we will admit that there is a plain scriptural example of it. But till then, we must be permitted to doubt ; especially as we find no mention made of change of raiment, nor any allusion to a provision for such change, in all the New Testament account of baptisms.

But should we admit that John baptized our Lord by immersing him in Jordan, this is no guide for us ; and when our Baptist brethren call on men to imitate their Lord, *by going down into a watery grave*, as they often express it, they are calling on them to do what the Scriptures no where require. We are to follow

Christ's example, it is true, but not in all things. Christ was circumcised, he ate the passover, he lived a single life, he fasted forty days continuously, he was not baptized till thirty years of age ; are we then to follow his example in all these respects ? If we are to be immersed because Christ was immersed, (supposing that he was really immersed) I cannot see why baptism must not always be administered to a person at thirty years of age, as well as by immersion : his age was one circumstance attending Christ's baptism, as well as the manner in which the water was applied. The truth is, the baptism of John was quite a different thing from christian baptism. It was appointed of God, doubtless as a token of the purification professedly desired by those who came confessing their sins. It was not administered in the name of the Trinity. It was not administered under the commission of Christ. It was begun and ended before christian baptism was instituted. Those whom John had baptized, afterwards received christian baptism, Acts xix. 1—5 ; and probably not a few of those baptized by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, had before been baptized by John. Our Lord submitted to John's baptism, as an ordinance of divine appointment ; and he was also thereby inducted into his office as a priest. Aaron and his sons were thus set apart to the priest's office, by being washed, Lev. viii. 6, and Christ was a high priest over the house of God, Heb. x. 21. vii. 11. therefore it was performed when he was thirty years of age. Luke iii. 23, compare Numb. iv. 3. Whether, therefore, Christ was immersed or not, it furnishes no guide for us. His was not christian baptism ; and we are

no where referred to it as an example for our imitation in baptism.

Nor does the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, furnish decisive evidence that he was immersed, Acts viii. 38, 39. "*He commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch : and he baptized him. And when they had come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more ; and he went on his way rejoicing.*"

There is here nothing that should lead us to suppose the eunuch's baptism was by immersion.* In that warm climate, and loosely clad, with the feet protected only by sandals, (a kind of sole, of wood or leather fastened to the sole of the foot,) to dip the feet in water would be easy, and pleasant ; and if they only went up to the knees in water, the *into* and *out of* the water are natural and appropriate. The truth is, the words translated into and out of, may just

* On the contrary, as Philip was expounding, Isa. liii. 7, 8, which describes the sufferings of Christ, and the blessings of the gospel ; and the eunuch addressed himself to Philip, "see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" This address seems very abrupt till we turn to Isaiah, and find a few verses before the passage mentioned, these words, "so shall he sprinkle many nations." On this Philip had doubtless spoken. If he explained it to mean spiritual blessings, as these blessings are represented by baptism, he would doubtless explain that ordinance. Or if, as is most probable, he explained the passage as denoting the ordinance of christian baptism itself ; in either case we perceive the appropriateness of the eunuch's inquiry, and find strong ground to believe that the eunuch was baptized by sprinkling, in fulfilment of this prophecy, not by immersion.

as well be rendered *to* and *from* : as when John said *flee from the wrath to come*, who would think of saying flee out of the wrath to come ? yet the word is the same as when it is said of our Lord, Matt. iii. 16 ; *Jesus when he was baptized came up straightway out of the water*. If these passages be translated, John was baptizing at the Jordan ; they went down to the water, and came up from the water ; where would be the evidence of immersion ?

When it is said John was baptizing in *Ænon* near to Salem, because there was *much water* there, the words are literally *many waters*, i. e. streams or fountains of water ; which were necessary for the comfort of his hearers in the desert ; but cannot show that he baptized by immersion. Sandys, a traveller who has been on the spot, assures us it is a sandy region ; the little springs gushing out there, being soon absorbed by the sands. Nothing like water suitable for immersion, can, now at least, be found there. But if the Apostles could baptize three thousand in one day at Jerusalem, who can believe that John must go to *Ænon*, merely to have water sufficient to *baptize* with ?

The baptism of the three thousand on the day of pentecost at Jerusalem, could not, as it would seem, have been performed by immersion, as Dr. Woods of Andover has recently shown, Acts ii. 41. It was the third hour, or about nine o'clock A. M. when Peter began to speak. Much was said and much done ; and before three thousand persons could have received suitable instruction, and satisfied the Apostles of the genuineness of their conversion, a great part of the day must have been spent. Doubtless all the twelve

Apostles engaged in baptizing. It was at Pentecost, in May, the dry season; the brook Kedron was no doubt dry; and no pool or reservoir of water did the city furnish, except the pool of Siloam, (see Jahn. § 335.) Yet no hint is given of their going away; nothing of changing garments. Baths there doubtless were in the houses of the wealthy; but how unlikely that the disciples of the crucified Jesus, and this great multitude should be admitted to these baths? Supposing however all these difficulties got over, and that abundance of water was to be had for immersion, and admitting that each of the twelve Apostles could find a suitable place to baptize in by immersion, and that five hours were employed solely in baptizing, (all which is highly improbable) there must have been five hundred baptized each hour; that is, fifty to each apostle, for one hour, or little more than a minute for baptizing each; and that for five hours in succession! It is incredible! To do it by immersion were impossible, without a series of miracles to aid them. A sober examination of the baptism of the three thousand on the day of pentecost, leaves no room to believe that immersion could have been the mode practised. If sprinkling or pouring water were the mode, the transaction might have taken place in the time specified.

The baptism of Simon Magus, and other Samaritans, Acts viii. 12, 13, that of the Corinthians recorded Acts xviii. 8, and of twelve mentioned Acts xix. 5. 7, whom Paul baptized, furnish no evidence as to the mode, since it is merely said they were baptized. Paul's baptism is recorded Acts ix. 17, 18. When Ananias came to him and laid his hands on him, it is

said, "*he arose and was baptized, and when he had received meat he was strengthened.*" All this took place in Paul's chamber, he arose, and was baptized, (standing no doubt,) either by sprinkling or pouring, and then took nourishment; for he had been three days without food. Nothing is said about his going out to be immersed in a stream or a bath; and his weakness after so long fasting and so much mental anguish, renders it extremely unlikely that he should have done so. From the record all appears to have taken place on the spot; compare Acts xxii. 16.

The baptism of Lydia and her household is next recorded. She appears to have been converted and baptized in a proseuchœ, an oratory or place for prayer, on the bank of a river near Philippi; Acts xvi. 15, compare v. 12, 13: but not a word is said about going to the river, or changing her dress, or any thing that looks like immersion. She came to worship, not expecting baptism; and on her conversion was there baptized, without preparation or delay. The same chapter, v. 25—24, contains an account of the baptism of the jailer and his family. He took the prisoners out of the inner prison, or dungeon, and brought them out, i. e. doubtless into the outer prison. There they preached, there he believed, and there he was baptized; after which he took them into his house, i. e. the apartments in the prison building occupied by his own family, and set meat before them. All this was done in the night. It is very improbable that at that hour they should have gone out to a stream: the guards outside would have prevented them: it would have been a violation of the jailer's trust to lead them

out of prison into the city. And in the prison itself, it is highly improbable that conveniences should have been found, to immerse this whole family. The whole history renders it highly improbable that they should have been baptized by immersion : it was most likely done by pouring or sprinkling.

The baptism of Cornelius and his household is recorded, Acts x. 44—47 : “ the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard Peter.” The Jews present were astonished, because that on the gentiles was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost. This induced Peter to propose baptism ; their baptism, was to represent this spiritual work : baptizing them by *pouring* water, would fitly represent it, but immersing them would not. Accordingly Peter asks, “ *who can forbid water that these should not be baptized ?*” These words plainly imply that water was to be *brought to them*, not that they were to be *conducted to the water*. Well according, not with immersion, but with pouring or sprinkling ; a fit emblem of the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost.

These are all the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament. In not one case is it clear that baptism was administered by immersion : in several of them it is almost certain it must have been done by sprinkling or by affusion. And since God nowhere prescribes any one mode exclusively, we ought not to regard the mode as essential, or even of much importance ; although the evidence in favour of sprinkling or pouring, greatly preponderates. Wherever men were when converted, there they were baptized, whether in the streets of a city, in a place of prayer, at home, or even in a prison. No preparation, no

change of place, no change of garments, is ever hinted at. In no instance recorded in the New Testament, could the person baptized have expected to receive this ordinance, when he came to the place where it was administered to him ; and of course preparation was out of the question.

The expression found in *Rom. vi. 4. buried with him* (i. e. Christ) *by baptism, unto death*, is often quoted to prove that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism ; since no other mode represents burial, compare *Col. ii. 12.* The language is figurative ; the Apostle refers to the thing signified by baptism, not at all to the mode of administering that ordinance. The Jews did not always bury as we do by covering the body under ground, but often by laying it in a niche, or cave, hewn out of a rock. What resemblance is there between a man's being plunged in water, and Christ's body being placed in a niche cut out of a rock ? Robinson the Baptist historian, and Mr. Judson the Baptist missionary in the East, both admit that this passage is misapplied, when used as evidence of the mode of baptism. And that it is so, is apparent ; because, the Apostle goes on to declare that believers are, in baptism, also planted into the likeness of Christ's death, and crucified with him. If the *mode* of baptism be in the Apostle's view, that mode must be equally a resemblance of planting, and crucifying, as of burying. But who will pretend that immersion represents the act of planting, or of crucifying ? Plainly, the Apostle means, that in regeneration, which baptism represents, believers become mortified *to sin* : they are, as to the

love and practice of their former sins, as though they were dead and buried.

That baptism, as an ordinance, is not designed to represent or commemorate the death of Christ, is plain ; for baptism is a *washing*, which always denotes purification, not death. Besides, the Lord's supper is the ordinance appointed expressly to commemorate Christ's death ; and if baptism be intended to represent it also, then two distinct ordinances are appointed to represent the same thing. The expression *buried with him by baptism into death*, has therefore no reference to immersion at all.

We may now understand how to appreciate the suggestion which some baptist writers have made, that in the various places where baptism is mentioned, the expression *with water* should be translated *in water*, e. g. "*I indeed baptize you with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*," Acts xi. 16. It would be manifestly absurd to say, ye shall be baptized *in the Holy Ghost*, since the Holy Ghost is usually represented as poured out upon men ; the baptists would translate baptize *immerse*, and then *immerse you with water* does not sound well ; immerse in water suits them better : but immerse in the Holy Ghost, and immerse you in fire, is just as inappropriate.

The little word here in dispute is sometimes translated *in*, sometimes *at*, and sometimes *with* ; the connexion must determine which version is appropriate. In the passage, "*they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword*," Matt. xxvi. 52 ; to say perish *in the sword* would be absurd ; and inasmuch as it were equally absurd to say he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost,

propriety requires that the corresponding clause should read, *baptize you with water*, which shows that immersion could not have been the mode intended.

One more passage only will I adduce—1 Cor. x. 1, 2: “Our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea;” compare with Exod. xiv. 22, 28, 29; where we learn that the children of Israel walked on dry land. Now, say some, the cloud above, which poured out water upon them, (see Ps. lxxvii. 16—20,) and the sea on each side, show they were completely enveloped in water, or *immersed*; and that this immersion is the baptism here spoken of. But they walked on *dry land*; they were not flooded by descending waters: so far as they were wet at all, it must have been by sprinkling, from the clouds, and from the spray of the waves; and if any reference be here intended to the *mode of baptism*, the passage lends no evidence in support of immersion, but rather of sprinkling. But, probably, no thought of the mode of baptism was before the Apostle’s mind. As a religious ordinance, baptism was not instituted in the time of Moses. But as baptism implies a special obligation laid on the baptized, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, into whose name they are baptized; so, by the signal deliverance wrought for Israel, by the hand of Moses, at the time of their passage through the Red Sea, God laid Israel under special obligation to obey Moses, their leader, as God’s messenger to them. A strong, but impressive figure, is here used, when it is said, “were all baptized unto Moses in the sea.”

Since, then, the word baptize can by no means be

shown to denote immersion only ; since there is no decisive evidence that either the baptism of our Lord, or any of the baptisms recorded in the book of Acts, was performed by immersion ; but strong ground to believe, that the ordinance was usually administered by pouring or sprinkling ; and, since no one of the passages in the epistles, in which baptism is mentioned, does, when candidly examined, appear to relate to the mode of baptism at all ; and, consequently, not the shadow of an argument can be derived from them in favour of immersion ; it is plain the Scriptures no where teach, either by precept or by example, that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism : no stress is laid upon this point in any part of the word of God. We conclude, therefore, that baptism is rightly administered, either by immersion, by pouring, or by sprinkling ; while convenience, and its obvious resemblance to the ancient method of purifying, and its agreement with the prophecy, found in Isâ. lii. 15, induce us rather to prefer sprinkling.

If the *circumstances* attending the application of water in baptism, be so important, we cannot see why equal importance should not be attached to an exact compliance with the primitive mode of receiving and administering the Lord's supper : that is a positive ordinance, and we are as much bound to exact conformity with the scriptural method of administering that ordinance, as in the case of baptism. Why, then, do not Baptists administer the Lord's supper at the close of a festive entertainment, in an upper chamber, and in the evening ? Why do they not partake of it, all reclining at full length on couches or beds, spread around one

common table ? They answer, these were unimportant circumstances, never insisted on in the word of God. Right. And we reply, the mode in which water is administered in baptism, whether by immersing, pouring, or sprinkling, is an unimportant circumstance, nowhere insisted on, or particularly required, in the whole word of God. Let every one take heed, then, lest, in opposing and denying infant baptism, or baptism as administered by sprinkling, he be found fighting against God !*

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

I cannot consent wholly to dismiss this subject, without requesting the reader's serious attention to a few closing remarks.

It has, I think, been shown, not only that baptism, when administered by sprinkling water in the name of the Holy Trinity, is a valid christian ordinance, but also that the infant children of God's people are proper subjects of baptism, and ought to be consecrated

* Since this work went to the press, a pamphlet, entitled "The Scriptural Directory to Baptism," by a Layman, published at N.Y. 1830, has been put into my hands, and perused with great pleasure ; and while I should dissent from some few positions laid down by the author, I regard it as an ingenious exposition of the improbability that immersion could have been the mode in which baptism was administered, either by John the Baptist, or by the Apostles. See particularly the remarks on the mode of John's baptism, p. 12—15 ; on the baptism of Jesus Christ, p. 15—17 ; and on the baptism at the feast of Pentecost, p. 24—27.

to the Most High in that sacred ordinance ; so that all the witticisms in which some writers have indulged on what they are pleased to term, “ *baby sprinkling*,” are nothing less than “ *profane ridicule !*”

Infant baptism, rightly viewed, is not only a scriptural rite, but one full of meaning, full of interest, to children, to parents, to the church, and to society at large.

On christian parents I would affectionately call to consider dispassionately, and seriously, the interesting confirmation lent to the conclusion at which we have arrived, that infant baptism is of God’s appointment, by the accordance found in this institution with the general course of God’s dealings with mankind, and with his church in all ages ; and by its falling in so admirably with the finest feelings of our nature ; and rendering parental affection subsidiary to the attainment of the great end proposed in the maintenance of a church on earth. Infant baptism is practised on the belief, that God has a peculiar regard to the children of his people, more than to other children ; that he is still engaged, by promise, to be their God ; to continue to them the revelation of his will, the ordinances of his worship, and among them, especially, to shower down the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit ; so that the piety of parents is, by God’s gracious appointment, their ground of right to their children, for the reception of an ordinance, which marks those children as that visible society, *to whom are committed the oracles of God*—Rom. iii. 2 ; and *to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the service of God*,

and *the promises*—ix. 4. It is based on the conviction, that the children are beloved for their fathers' sake.

Now, that the condition of children should be affected by the character of the parents, appears to be a principle constantly acted on in God's government of the world. The dispensations of his providence towards the world at large, discover it. The character of parents has usually a potent influence on the destiny of their children, for life. The children of parents who are indolent, dissipated, or grossly wicked, we expect to see growing up, for the most part, uneducated and undisciplined. Their habits, we expect, will be vicious ; their portion, poverty ; and frequently, wretchedness and infamy for life. But who fails to regard industry, sobriety, and virtue, in the parents, as a happy pledge to the children of a virtuous education, industrious habits, and fair prospects, for life ? And the event usually justifies these expectations. Now, he who directs the affairs of providence, is the God of the Bible and of religion ; and it were only reasonable to expect, that in the organization of the church, there should be a special provision for children, analogical to that found in the arrangements of providence ; so that they who become God's people, should find their piety a pledge of tender mercies to their children. Such analogy we discover in the baptismal covenant, wherein, while the parent publicly recognises the child to be the sole property of Jehovah, and engages to bring it up for him ; God, also, engages, by covenant promise, to be a God to the child, and furnish it, as one of his visible people, with all the means requisite to make it acquainted

with his character, and his will, and adapted to effect a thorough reconciliation between it and himself.

In the very dawn of man's history, we find this same principle acted on in God's treatment of Adam, the first man. On the character of the common parent of mankind, the moral character of all his posterity was suspended. Adam fell by sin; and we know that, *By one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners*—Rom. v. 19.

In God's dealings with his church, from the age of Abraham to the coming of Christ, we find the same principle still kept in view. When God would confer on his church a more regular organization, he selected Abraham, and entered into covenant with him. From that time, for the sake of Abraham's faith, blessings flowed largely on his posterity, for many generations. Among them, true religion was established and maintained; among them, the true church was found; from among them, also, the heirs of life were taken. These are historical facts, plain and undeniable; all bespeaking peculiar favours bestowed on children for the parents' sake, during the entire continuance of the Old Testament dispensation. Now, what was there in the conduct of our adorable Redeemer, which could intimate, that at the opening of the gospel dispensation, this great principle should be abandoned? Nothing, assuredly, nothing! But his condescending notice of little children, (Matt. xix. 14. Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16,) seemed plainly to intimate the contrary. The permission granted to christian parents to consecrate their children to the God of Abraham, (in whose time already the gospel was in substance made known,) and

the engagement of Jehovah to be their God, are therefore, in beautiful keeping with God's treatment of men in all ages, whether of the church or of the world.

Ungodly men, who refuse to serve their Maker, cannot be supposed to desire that their children should serve the Lord ; and we find in Scripture no provision made, no promise given, to their children.

But Christians do love God ; and parental feeling causes them to desire, with peculiar earnestness, that their children should love and serve him too. True it is, that piety is not hereditary ; salvation is not to be secured by entail. But in permitting his people to consecrate to him their children in baptism, the appointed seal of a covenant, in which God promises to be the God of believers, and of their seed with them ; a promise, which secures the maintenance of a visible church, in the line of the consecrated seed, and the continuance among them, of religious instruction, of revealed truth, and divine ordinances, with all their inestimable benefits, as means of salvation ; we see a provision, that renders parental affection subsidiary to the best interests of children, and to the maintenance of true religion on earth, just as it was in ancient times, and just as we might suppose it ought to be : a provision, consequently, that commends itself to the tenderest feeling of our hearts.

If we perceived that infant baptism was, in its spirit, opposed to the general course of God's dealings with mankind, and with his church in past ages ; or that it contained provisions revolting to the strong feeling of parental affection, we might well pause. But, when we perceive that it is, throughout, in strict unison

with God's general treatment of men, in other cases ; and that it enlists parental tenderness in the hallowed cause of piety ; strong confirmation is thereby added to our faith, that it is truly of God ; a privilege greatly desirable for our children.

If christian parents would carefully weigh this consideration, they could scarcely fail to regard it as an inestimable privilege, to bring their children, by baptism, within the operation of that covenant, which alone enjoins it on parents to “*train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;*” and which alone conveys the promise, “*I will be a God to your seed after you in their generations.*” For to his people alone, God's promises apply ; because his people alone acknowledge his authority, and engage to obey all his commands. The provision found in Scripture for the religious education of children, is one of the blessings of that covenant, of which infant baptism is the seal. And no one, who does not, by presenting his children to God in baptism, become a party to that covenant, can, on scriptural grounds, plead the promise of God for his children, or look with confidence for the divine blessing on his labours, and instructions for their good. Of the baptized, as a body, Jehovah engages to be their God in a peculiar sense, above that in which he is the God of all others, as their creator and judge. By baptism, a child is incorporated into a society who are now the visible people of God, enjoying the knowledge of true religion, and the means of grace for salvation ; and not only so, but a society whom God graciously engages, in the baptismal covenant, to continue as his visible church on earth, in the line of their successors, added to them by baptism.

Baptism is not conversion : baptism is not an infallible pledge of conversion ; but it is a pledge to the baptized, that among them the means of grace and the ordinances of true religion shall be perpetuated. Without these ordinances, what hope could we have of men's salvation ? Where they are among a people, regenerating influence is usually sent down, and souls are born again unto God.

In a world lying in wickedness, full of changes and revolutions, every unconverted inhabitant of which has a heart replete with infidelity, and enmity against God, and impatient of the restraints imposed by his laws ; a world, whose inhabitants, but for God's restraining providence, would speedily combine to extirpate the church, and banish true religion from the earth ; it must surely be an invaluable privilege to be numbered with a society, to whom the omnipotent God pledges the continuance of true religion, and its ordinances, for salvation. It surely is desirable to have our children thus housed as it were, by baptism among the people of God ; provided with means adapted to keep them above the reach of those billows of wickedness, that else would drown true piety, extinguish the hope of life, and inundate the world with atheism, and infidelity, and death.

God will always have a church on earth, and he will bless his preached word to men's conversion. But if you blot out the promise, "*I will be the God of thy seed after thee in their generations,*" and annul the covenant which seals to our children that promise in baptism, you have no certainty, no divine warrant to sustain the hope, that God will not restrain his grace to-mor.

row ; convert no more among *us* ; continue the ordinances of his worship here, only just long enough to prepare for heaven, all who are *now* true saints among us ; and then leave the rest to follow the impulse of their native enmity against him, renounce christianity, destroy the bible, desecrate his altars, tear down his temples, and plunge back again into the midnight darkness of paganism and atheism, hurrying away our children along with them ; while the light of heavenly truth shall be made to beam, and heavenly grace shall be made to stream down with saving power, upon nations now walking in darkness, and on lands now lying in the shadow of death. No certain promise of the continuance of religion in *our* land, or among *our* children can be found, if infant baptism be not of God. But if it be, and if it seal to the baptized that covenant, which conveys the promise that God will be their God ; and which, of course, secures the continuance of all the means of grace among them. that they may know and serve him as their God ; then the fear of our children returning as a body to gross heathenism, and utterly perishing without hope, is taken away. Every unrenewed man's heart is prone to atheism, and but for the restraints God imposes, the unconverted, would, as a body, plunge into atheism ; and our children with them. These restraints are nowhere promised to any particular community ; and of consequence are not promised to this community ; but in that very covenant, of which infant baptism is the gracious seal. Let parents consider, then, Is it desirable that their children should dwell where the gospel is ? That they should sit under its sound, and enjoy its

ordinances? Amid all the vicissitudes of this wicked world *nothing furnishes us with an infallible certainty of these blessings being continued to them*, but their being joined to the visible people of the omnipotent God in baptism: for to the baptized alone does he absolutely pledge the continuance of the *lively oracles, the services of God, and the promises*.

Once more, *infant baptism commends itself to pious parents with peculiar force, in view of our entire depravity, and the absolute sovereignty of God's grace*.

All men lie involved in one common condemnation, without any title to the favour of God; and even they to whom the gospel offer is made, if left to themselves, will madly reject the offer and perish. With hearts thus at enmity against God, and bent on destruction, are the children of christians, just as truly as others: while God asserts his right to dispense his renovating grace according to his sovereign will: "*He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.*" But when we find from among the fallen children of men, some who, by divine authority, are organized into one visible society, under the provisions of a covenant conveying the promise that Jehovah will *be their God*; when we find that in times of old, it was from among these, the children of his covenant, that God selected the heirs of life; when we find that in his holy word, God shows his regard to the covenant of lineally descending blessing, by styling himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; is there not ample ground to hope that God, though sovereign in the bestowment of his favours, will nevertheless, in selecting from among those who are all justly condemned, the recipients of

his saving mercy, continue, as of old, to manifest peculiar regard to that covenant, still in force, still believed in, and pleaded by his people, by pouring down the unmerited favour of his renovating grace, most richly, within the line formed by the covenant seal? Hitherto God has done this in a remarkable manner. For in every age, from the time of Abraham, in almost every christian church, and every revival of religion, a vast majority of those hopefully converted, have been such as had had the seal of God's covenant affixed to them in their childhood. So long, then, as the covenant with Abraham is still in force, and diffuses its blessings on the gentiles; so long as God still promises to be a God to his people and their seed; so long as the Bible records him as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; so long as, in the dealings of his providence with his church, a regard so marked to the baptized seed of the covenant, is undeniably discovered, in the conversion of a large proportion of such, rather than of the unbaptized; christian parents have reason to regard baptism, in the midst of a world inundated with wickedness, ever inclining to atheism, and inveterate in hostility against the blessed gospel, as opening, like Noah's ark of old, an asylum for the children of the church; securing them, as a body, from utter ignorance of the true God; and affording a cheering prospect of probability for their conversion to God. No christian parent can duly ponder these considerations, as it would seem, without feeling desirous to see his children added to the visible people of God by baptism, even in early infancy.

Parents who have dedicated their children to God, are

especially called upon to consider the duties incumbent on them.

Such parents, it is to be presumed, are themselves believers, professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The cases recorded in the New Testament, of households baptized, are such as followed the evidence of faith furnished by the head of the house. The children, declared by the apostle Paul to be holy, (i. e. fit to be consecrated to God,) are those, of whose parents, one, at least, is regarded by the church as a believer. The child has no right in itself, but in its parent, as a believer; as one who comes before the church, declaring that he personally trusts in God's promise, "*I will be a God to thee;*" and desires to claim, for his child, the application of that ordinance appointed as a covenant seal, to interest it in the same blessing; according to the other part of the promise, "*I will be a God to thy seed.*"

Every parent, therefore, who comes forward intelligently, to ask baptism for a child, asks it as a seal of the covenant with Abraham; and in so doing, he publicly assents to the terms of that gracious covenant; i. e. he avouches the Lord to be his God; which is virtually *making a full profession of piety*. Let every parent, who has presented his children to God in baptism, bear this in mind. Whether he intended it or not, he did in that act openly declare the Lord to be his God, and acknowledge himself bound to obey all God's commandments. Can he, after this, refuse to sit down at the Lord's table? Or refuse to prepare himself to partake, in the manner God requires? Or refuse to train up his children prayerfully for God, without proving himself a covenant-breaker?

Moreover, the truths represented, and the promises implied, in presenting a child to God in baptism, render the duty of parents to labour assiduously and prayerfully, for the conversion of their baptized children, too plain to be doubted. The parent, by the very act of presenting his child for baptism, (if he understand what he is doing,) significantly intimates, that he regards his child as a depraved being, needing renovation, and an interest in Christ for salvation ; as one cut off from all hope on any ground, other than the sovereign mercy of God, dispensed through Jesus Christ ; the application of whose cleansing blood is herein typically exhibited. This act plainly intimates, that the parent believes God has a peculiarly gracious regard for the seed of his people ; that them God claims as his own ; for them, God has provided religious instruction ; and from among them, chiefly, as marked by baptism, God will take his chosen race. Now, how can that parent, who, in sincere belief of all this, presents his children for baptism, afterwards neglect any known means for their conversion ? If, by *the truth*, God renovates the heart, the believing parent will assiduously seek to imbue the minds of his children with *the truth* ; and so to present it, embodied in his life, and sustained by his example, as may promise best to reach the heart, and rouse the consciences of his children. And one great advantage accruing from infant baptism, lies in its tendency to impress parents with a sense of their obligations to train up their children for God, and incite them to do it. It does not create that obligation, but it deepens it ; and it is well calculated to imprint a sense of that obligation

on the parent's heart. It is a solemn, religious ordinance ; symbolically setting forth the most affecting truths of the gospel ; implying the most solemn professions and promises on the part of the parent ; an ordinance usually performed in the house of God, in the presence of his assembled church, and in the view of hundreds of spectators. It is an era distinctly marked in the history of parent and child ; every recollection of which, speaks to the parent's conscience, of God's claim to that child ; and of obligations publicly recognised, to train it up for him. And, consequently, infant baptism is a pledge to baptized children of a more careful religious education than they could enjoy without it. And it affords to parents no light ground of hope, that their prayerful and believing efforts for their children's conversion to God, will be crowned with his blessing.

Lastly, *Baptized persons should consider the relations into which they are brought by their baptism, and the duties thence devolving upon them.*

By your baptism in infancy, you were brought into a near and peculiar relation to the church of God : you were numbered among the lambs of the flock ; you obtained an interest in the prayers of God's people ; and a right to the enjoyment of all those ordinances of Christ, and those means of grace, which Christ has appointed for infant members of his church. These are, the instruction and godly example of parents ; their watchfulness over the children's conduct, reproof of their errors, and prayers for their welfare ; together with attendance on public worship, and on the duties of family religion. But the great end of all these means

was to lead you to embrace religion of your own free choice ; to lead you, in genuine repentance, to a Saviour's feet ; to lead you to acknowledge, by a living faith, the God of your fathers as your God ; and, on a profession of that faith, to take your place with the church at the Lord's table. Every circumcised person, under the law, was bound, on arriving at a suitable age, to recognise, by his own act, the covenant, God of Abraham as his God, by taking part in the solemn services of the passover, as the law directed ; or he forfeited his interest in the covenant mercies of Abraham's God. His refusal cut him off from God's people. (Compare Numb. ix. 13.)

In like manner, every baptized person, on reaching years of discretion, is bound to become a voluntary party to the baptismal covenant, by taking for his God, the God, who in his baptism, sealed him as His own : yielding submission to his claims ; accepting the provision made for him through Christ, the promised seed ; and openly avowing the Lord to be his God, by sitting down with a penitent and believing heart at the Lord's table. If he fail to do this, he refuses obedience to God's known will ; and thus voluntarily deprives himself of all further advantages provided in the covenant he despises. Circumcision did not, of itself, entitle the Jew to eat the passover, till he satisfied those appointed by the law to preside at that solemnity, that he was legally purified. In like manner, baptism does not of itself qualify a person to participate of the gospel passover, the Lord's supper, till he give evidence to the church that he is clean as the gospel prescribes ; i. e. penitent for sin, and purified by faith in Christ, and by

the Holy Ghost shed abroad in his heart. Baptism under the gospel, like circumcision under the law, confers membership in the visible church. But, as in the Old Testament church, (a comparatively dark dispensation,) outward purification was an indispensable preparation for participation in the further privileges of the church, and his circumcision laid a man under solemn obligation to secure that preparation before he could participate, and that, too, on pain of excision from all those church privileges. So, under the more perfect dispensation in the gospel church, inward purification, by a living faith, is the preparation required of baptized persons, for participation in the further privileges of the church, provided in the Lord's supper ; and his baptism lays every baptized person under the highest obligation to secure that preparation, in unfeigned repentance ; and to give evidence of it to the church, in a godly and consistent life.

All who hear the gospel, are bound to repent, and to consecrate themselves to God. But they who have been dedicated to God in baptism, by believing parents, have this obligation pressing upon them with peculiar force. You are the Lord's, my baptized reader ; he claims you as his. His *seal*, the token of his covenant right to you, has by his own authority been placed upon you. It is your privilege, your birthright, to avail yourself of the means of grace, that you may know God's will ; seek him as your Lord, and obtain an interest in his saving favour, by surrendering your heart to him in early youth.

You can never divest yourself of God's seal. If you are licentious, or profane, or infidel, or coldly

moral, turning a deaf ear to the blessed Saviour's call, still you are baptized. And is it not enough to make angels weep, and saints in glory weep, to behold baptized sabbath-breakers, baptized swearers, baptized profligates, baptized rejecters of a Saviour's grace, in the midst of gospel light and gospel motives? Every baptized person, who continues impenitent, is like profane Esau—he despises his birthright.

Does any baptized sinner say within himself, “If my baptism lays me under such obligations, I will renounce it. I was baptized without my consent being asked, and I will not hold myself bound by such a transaction.” Stay! This is, indeed, despising your birthright, and the guilt of profane Esau undeniably rests upon you. What, a sinner renounce his baptism! Shake off the obligations it imposes! You may as well attempt to renounce your allegiance to God, shake off your responsibility to his judgment bar, and determine that your life shall not be a probation for eternity!

The God who created you, and created you a subject of his moral government, bound to obey his laws, on your responsibility at his dread tribunal, placed you on trial under christian privileges. He gave you to christian parents, commanded them to affix on you the seal of his covenant; and he holds you personally bound to accept the terms of that covenant, and to become one of the spiritual seed of Abraham, by true and living faith; as fully and as truly as he holds you bound to be honest, and to speak the truth. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* You are given to Christ, marked as his property, bound to obey him, to confide in him by faith,

and serve him with affectionate zeal, under the high sanctions of eternal life on your obedience, everlasting wretchedness the fruit of disobedience.

May the God of Abraham, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, crown with his approbation this humble attempt to vindicate his blessed covenant, render it conducive to the advancement of the cause of truth, and the edification and enlargement of his church—Amen !

NEWARK, Feb. 12, 1831.

ERRATA.

Page 5, line 9, *for* “furnishes,” *read* furnish.

p. 22, note, 13th line from bottom, *for* “*τε λογια*,” *read* *τα λογια*.

p. 24, 4th line of note, *for* “Apostolus ideam,” *read* idem Apostolus.

p. 24, note, line 10, *for* “procipuum,” *read* præcipuum.

p. 53, 5th line of note, *for* “phraise,” *read* phrase.

p. 93, line 17th from foot, *for* “five hundred,” *read* six hundred.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01021 3538